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Laguna Beach 2000

AT A GLANCE

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A Citizen's Informational Booklet
for Charting the Future of Laguna Beach

VISION LAGUNA

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Table of Contents

I Introduction 1

II History and Demographics 5

III The Economy 9

IV The Physical Environment 13

V Community Facilities and Services 25

VI Neighboring Communities 33

VII Appendices 39

Community Organizations and Neighborhood Associations of Laguna Beach 39

Resources 40

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Maps, Charts, and Tables

Introduction

Figure 1: Laguna Beach Vision and Strategic Planning Process

History and Demographics

Figure 2: Laguna Beach and Orange County Comparison

Figure 3: Laguna Beach Population Growth (1950-2020)

Figure 4: Laguna Beach Residents by Age (1999)

Figure 5: Education Attainment of Laguna Beach Residents 25+ (1999)

The Economy

Figure 6: Laguna Beach Sales Tax by Economic Segment

Figure 7: Laguna Beach Labor Force by Occupation (1990)

Figure 8: Local and Regional Employers

Figure 9: Laguna Beach Household Expenditures by Selected Product (1999)

The Physical Environment

Figure 10: Land Use Distribution

Figure 11: Laguna Beach Principal Neighborhoods

Figure 12: Housing Unit Growth by Jurisdiction

Figure 13: Annual Number of Building Plan Checks

Figure 14: Traffic Volume on Laguna Canyon Road

Figure 15A: Laguna Beach Open Space and Parks

Figure 15B: Inset of Laguna Beach Open Space and Parks

Community Facilities and Services

Figure 16: City of Laguna Beach Organization Chart

Figure 17: City of Laguna Beach Committees and Commissions

Figure 18: City of Laguna Beach Revenues (FY-2000)

Figure 19: City of Laguna Beach Expenditures (FY-2000)

Figure 20: Laguna Beach Crime Statistics (1993-1998)

Neighboring Communities

Figure 21: Regional Employment Growth (1995-2020)

Figure 22: Laguna Beach Region

Figure 23: 2020 Outlook on Travel within Orange County

Figure 24: Regional Profile

Figure 25: Newport Beach Profile

Figure 26: Irvine Profile

Figure 27: Laguna Niguel Profile

Figure 28: Laguna Hills Profile

Figure 29: Dana Point Profile

Figure 30: Laguna Woods Profile

Acknowledgments

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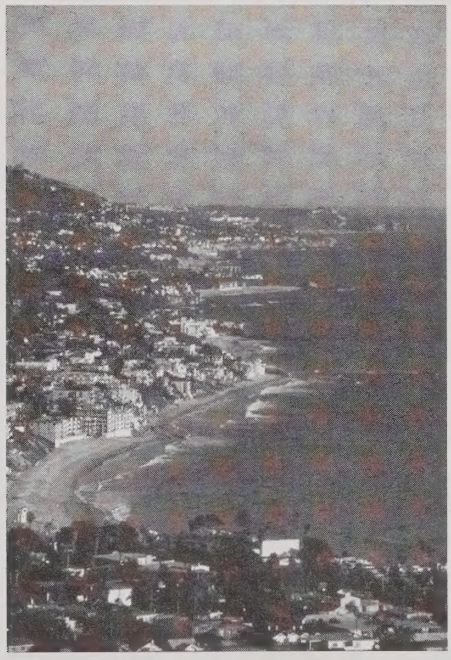


Introduction

Laguna Beach has many unique assets—the beach and ocean, hillsides and open space, the arts and festivals, distinctive neighborhoods, good schools and a vibrant Downtown. Perhaps, most of all, Laguna Beach is fortunate to have citizens who take pride in their City and work hard to preserve and enhance its unique character and quality of life.

At the same time, Laguna Beach faces many challenges as it enters the next century: substantial growth and development pressures from Orange County neighbors; increased infrastructure and service demand; water quality deterioration after storms and spills, and high housing costs. Laguna Beach also experiences the impact of tourists with varying needs depending on whether they stay for a few hours or for a few days. Each of these trends contributes to the challenge of guiding future decisions and actions.

To meet these challenges, the City initiated a strategic planning process based on establishing a shared vision for the community. This vision will lead to an action plan—a blueprint—to direct and coordinate future planning, decisions and action for the next thirty years.

If, thirty years ago, we had embarked on a similar process to create a vision for 1970-2000, the Strategic Plan might have looked like this:

- Reduce zoning densities by half.
- Prevent the widening of Pacific Coast Highway and Laguna Canyon Road.
- Adopt height limitations for all new construction.
- Create permanent homes for the City's major art festivals.
- Purchase all of the oceanfront property in the City's Downtown, and construct a Main Beach Park.
- Purchase all the open space the City can afford and create a permanent greenbelt surrounding the City.
- Preserve the character of public buildings such as City Hall, the High School and the Water District offices.
- Underground or disguise major public facilities, such as water reservoirs or park buildings, that are constructed in the open space areas.
- Annex South Laguna, Old Top of the World, and portions of Laguna Canyon.
- Prohibit internally illuminated signs and pole signs in commercial areas.
- Construct a community-wide system of resident-serving parks and recreation facilities.
- Preserve the resident-serving character of the City's Downtown.

The above is what has been accomplished over the last 30 years. What is the plan for the next 30 years?

Project Work Plan

The overall work plan for the Strategic Planning and Visioning Project spans twelve months. The first several months will be devoted to creating the vision, while the remaining months will focus on creating the Strategic Plan. The viability of the Strategic Plan will

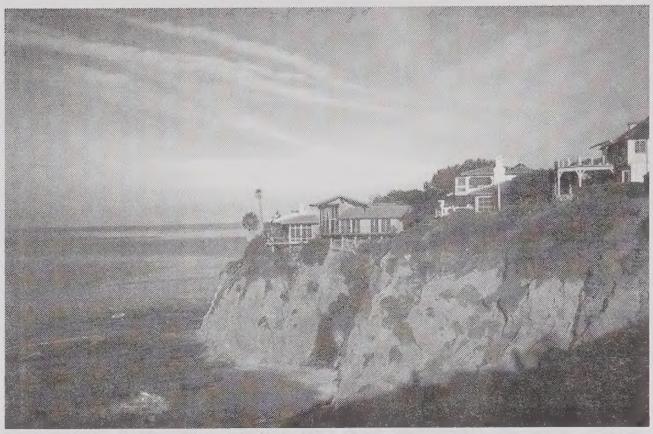
rest on how accurately it reflects the collective vision of what the citizens of Laguna Beach want for the next thirty years. Therefore, participation from every part of the community is imperative!

Between May and December 2000, the City will sponsor numerous opportunities for citizen involvement: celebrations, town hall meetings, and neighborhood workshops. The timeline (see Figure 1) shows how the various events fit together to provide each community member the opportunity to make his or her mark on Laguna Beach's future.

This booklet, "Laguna Beach At a Glance" is part of the process. It is a short compilation of information and trends that are relevant to future decision-making. At the Vision Fair and other community workshops, this booklet will serve as a helpful reference for discussing existing and future conditions and needs in Laguna Beach. This booklet also presents a series of issues and questions within each topic area to stimulate and focus discussion. This booklet is not intended to be comprehensive or detailed on all aspects of community life—for that we have provided a references list at the back. The booklet does not offer the answers. They will come from the community dialogue. But, it does provide a baseline of shared information—facts to build on and questions to consider.

Laguna Beach At a Glance is organized into five sections:

- History and Demographics
- The Economy
- The Physical Environment
- Community Facilities and Services
- Neighboring Communities



The booklet includes a preliminary list of available "indicators" such as crime rates, traffic statistics, per capita income and air quality to illustrate how Laguna Beach is doing in each of the five categories. Together these indicators measure community health and well-being. Other communities have invested substantial energy into developing more sophisticated indicators to assess community progress and compare services and qualities to other areas. Laguna Beach could consider this approach as one of its future strategies.

Other Recent Planning Efforts

In recent years, residents of Laguna Beach have undertaken a number of community-based projects focused on specific areas and interests within the City. Some of these planning efforts include:

- The Downtown Specific Plan Review
- The Village Entrance Master Plan
- The Diamond/Crestview Specific Plan
- The Implementation of the Open Space Initiative
- Treasure Island Reuse Plan

Each planning process involved grass-roots action and many volunteers, as well as support from City Hall.

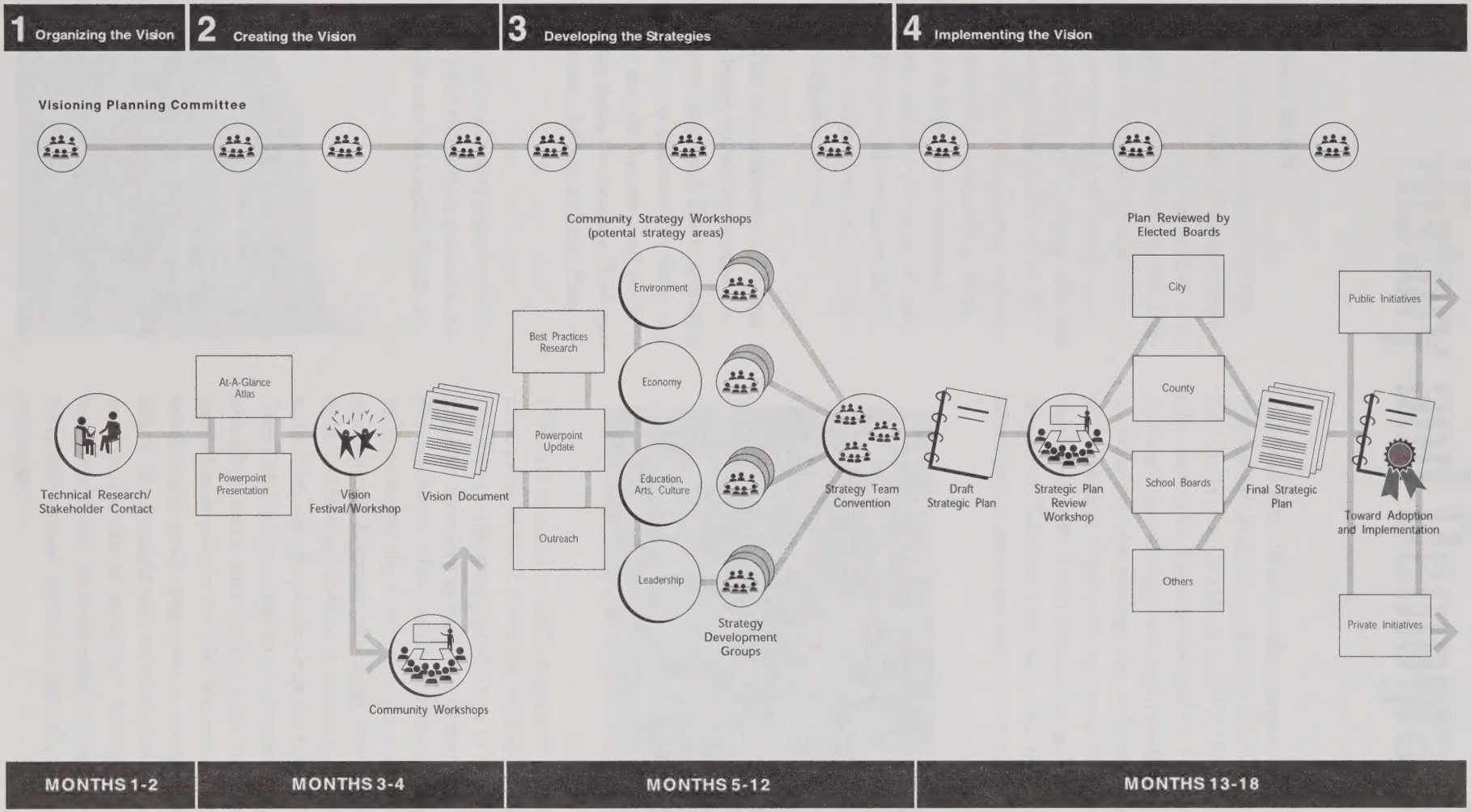


Figure 1
LAGUNA BEACH VISIONING AND STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

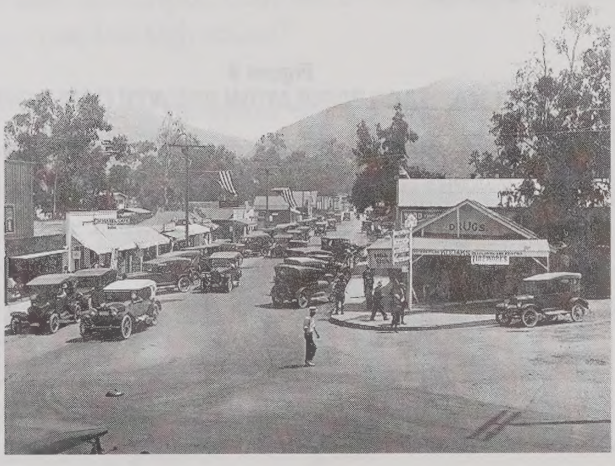
History and Demographics

A Brief History of Laguna Beach

Its dramatic coastal location, the growth of tourism, the influence of the arts, the impact of natural disasters, and an active citizenry with a strong internal sense of community have shaped the City's history. The Ute-Azteca Indians first inhabited Laguna's coastal plain characterized by the hidden coves of the Pacific coastline and a unique blend of steep cliffs, rolling hills, and deep canyons. Homesteading families arrived in the late 1800s to stake their claims in downtown Laguna and South Laguna, which unlike surrounding areas, had not been given away as Spanish or Mexican land grants. After planting their requisite ten acres of trees in accordance with the Timber Culture Act of 1871, many of these early homesteaders served summer vacationers seeking rest and relaxation by the sea.

Hotels were among the first establishments in Laguna Beach, with the Laguna Hotel (1896) still accommodating tourists from all over the world. The community has always welcomed visitors as illustrated by the Laguna Beach "Greeters" and the Laguna Gate at the head of Forest Avenue that bears the message "This gate hangs well and hinders none. Refresh and rest, then travel on."

When Norman St. Clair arrived in the picturesque village of Laguna Beach in 1903 he started a tradition. As the first important artist to come to Laguna Beach, St. Clair and some 30 to 40 other artists seeking ideal weather and magnificent scenery, collectively established the City as an artist colony in 1917. During the Depression, these same artists envisioned the Festival of Arts as an income-producing event, again establishing a creative tradition that also includes the world-renowned Pageant of the Masters. Together these events attract millions of visitors annually. Other festivals, art galleries, the Art Institute of Southern California, and the Laguna Art Museum also contribute to a vibrant arts community.



Officially founded in 1887, Laguna Beach incorporated as a city in 1927. From the beginning, preservation and forward planning played a role in maintaining a character attractive to residents, visitors and Hollywood film producers. After the first subdivision ordinance in 1953 promoted development in the pristine hillsides and canyons, Lagunans developed the first access standards in 1964 in an effort to control and slow development. This was the precursor to the Laguna Beach Greenbelt Plan, an effort to preserve the City's surrounding natural environment from further development. Consequently, the City and private citizens have purchased as much open space as possible. To "outsiders" this foresight and activism gives Laguna Beach residents the title of "eccentric", but these principles have maintained the community's village character for both residents and visitors in spite of growth and commercialism.

In recent years, fires, floods and land and mud slides have dominated Laguna Beach news. 1978, 1988, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1997 and 1998 are all years when Mother Nature delivered events with incredible force. These events served to bring Laguna Beach residents together, harkening back to the "pull-it-together spirit" exhibited by early pioneers.[1] Natural disasters, although unwanted, have developed Laguna Beach into a safer and wiser community.

Today, all of the above continue to shape Laguna Beach. By its topography, the City still remains relatively isolated from the rest of Orange County. However, the extreme pressures of rapid growth and development are being felt in many areas including increased traffic and congestion, the rising cost of living and housing, increasing urban runoff, a greater number of day tourists, and a greater demand on infrastructure and services. Now more than ever, the historical tradition of forward-thinking planning and an active citizenry will be called on to meet the challenges and visions for the City's future.

Demographics

Who we are and how we may be changing is important for future policy. Generally speaking, the Laguna Beach population is predominately older, well-educated and white, with higher-than-average incomes. Figure 2 offers a glimpse at the demographic profile of Laguna Beach in comparison to that of Orange County.

In the forty years from 1950 to 1990, the population of Laguna Beach has grown from about 6,000 to 24,000 residents (see Figure 3). This is an increase of over 400% but includes the 5,000 residents that were added when South Laguna was annexed in 1989. Even without this annexation, however, the City's population during this forty year period still grew by over 300%.

For the ten-year period from 1990 to the present, population growth has begun to level off and has increased by only 5% or 1,100 residents.[2] Over the next twenty years, it is expected that growth will continue to level off. From 2000 to 2020, the demographic projection is that population will only grow by 1.7% or 430 residents. By comparison, during the same period, the population for the County of Orange is expected to grow by 13.2%. (See the section on **Neighboring Communities** for a more full description of Orange County growth).

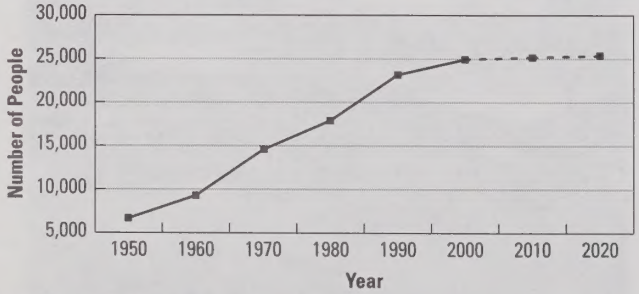
Figure 2
LAGUNA BEACH AND ORANGE COUNTY COMPARISON

	Laguna Beach	Orange County
1999 Population:	24,325	2,775,619
Population growth 1990-1999:	5%	13.5%
Population Projection 2000-2020:	1.7%	13.2%
1999 Median Age:	45.4 years	34.5 years
Median Household Income:	$65,382	$56,352
Per Capita Income:	$52,128	$25,746
Demographics:		
White:	85.7%	55.6%
Hispanic:	11.0%	29.7%
Asian & Pacific Islander:	2.4%	12.5%
Black:	0.7%	1.5%
Other:	0.3%	0.4%

Source: *Marketview Comparison Report for Laguna Beach and Orange County.* Claritas, Inc. 2000.

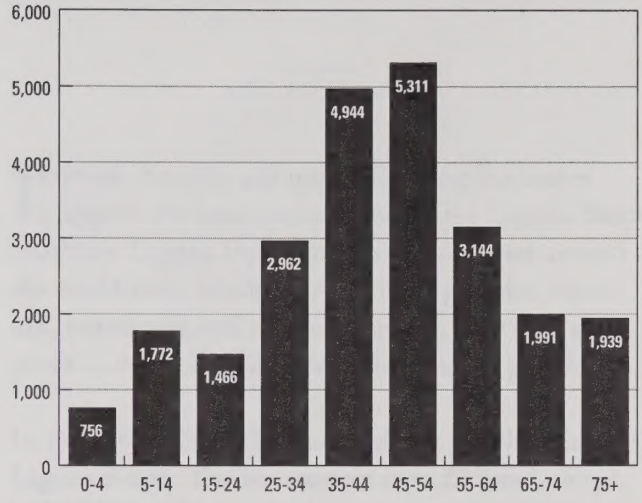
Like many communities, Laguna Beach is aging. In 1970, 52.7% of the population was 35 years or older. Today 71.2% of the population is 35 or older, with a median age of 45.4 years. The percentage of the population between ages 35 and 54 has also grown dramatically, from 24% in 1970 to 42% in 1999. Orange County's population has also aged, but its median age is only 34.5 years.[3]

Figure 3
LAGUNA BEACH POPULATION GROWTH (1950-2020)



Source: Center for Demographic Studies, California State University, Fullerton

Figure 4
LAGUNA BEACH RESIDENTS BY AGE (1999)



Source: *Marketview Comparison Report for Laguna Beach and Orange County.* Claritas, Inc. 2000.

While income levels and income distribution in Laguna Beach are comparable to those in surrounding jurisdictions, they are still well above the average for Orange County and the state of California. In 1999, Laguna Beach's median household income was $65,382, a 21% increase over the prior ten years. Per capita income in 1999 was $52,128. These income levels were 16% higher than Orange County's 1999 median household income of $56,352 and twice the County's per capita income of $25,746.[4] This comparison to the County is even more significant given that the County's income level is higher than the national average, the state average, and the averages for the neighboring counties.[5]

Figure 5 illustrates that Lagunans are also a very educated group. In 1990, 57% of the residents had completed either a graduate degree, a bachelor's degree, or an associates degree. Only 6% of the population did not complete high school.[6]

Over the years, the ethnic diversity of Laguna Beach has increased although Laguna continues to be a predominately white community. Today, Hispanics make up 11% of the total population while Asians and Pacific Islanders make up 2.4% and Blacks make up 0.7% of the population. By contrast, the total population of Orange County is 29.7% Hispanic, 12.5% Asian and 1.5% Black.[7] Government projections show Orange County's Hispanic community growing and the white population leveling off.

Questions to Consider

- ***What might be learned from Laguna Beach's colorful history?***
- ***What are some of the "defining moments" in the City's history?***
- ***What challenges will Laguna Beach face due to changing demographics such as aging, income levels, and diversification?***

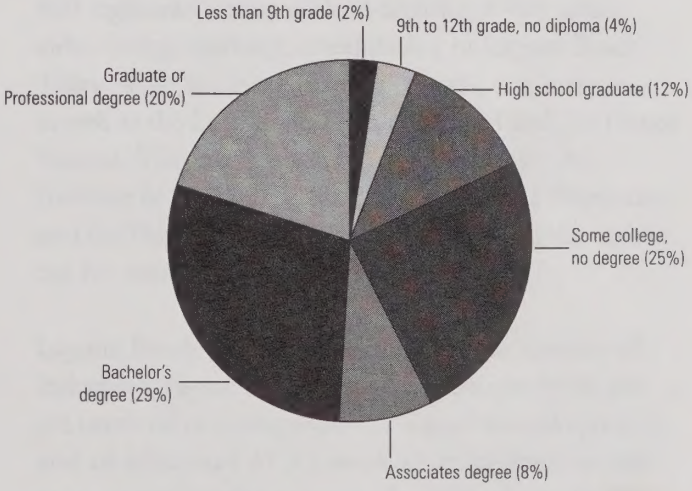


Figure 5
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF LAGUNA BEACH RESIDENTS (25+ YEARS)

Source: U.S. 1990 Census

[1] *Laguna Beach Local Color.* Michael A Maxsenti. The Max Company. 1998.
[2] *Marketview Comparison Report for Laguna Beach and Orange County.* Claritas, Inc. 2000.
[3] *Marketview Comparison Report for Laguna Beach and Orange County.* Claritas, Inc. 2000.
[4] *Marketview Comparison Report for Laguna Beach and Orange County.* Claritas, Inc. 2000.
[5] *Orange County Community Indicators Report.* County of Orange. 1999.
[6] 1990 United States Census
[7] *Marketview Comparison Report for Laguna Beach and Orange County.* Claritas, Inc. 2000.

The Economy

Tourism, the arts, and resident-serving businesses comprise the main components of the Laguna Beach economy. Laguna Beach attracts visitors from around the world to its beaches, art festivals, galleries, museum, restaurants and unique shopping. The City also provides stores and services for its resident population.

In 1999, the City estimates 3 million people visited Laguna Beach. Tourists support over 22 hotel, motel, bed and breakfast, and resort properties. In 1999, bed tax revenue from hotel/motel room sales was approximately $3 million, representing 13% of the City's general fund revenue. Seventy restaurants and a growing night life serve day visitors from neighboring communities, longer staying tourists, and local residents. As seen in Figure 6, restaurants contribute the greatest amount of sales tax revenue to the City. Visitors' spending supports a large retail trade, making it another of the City's largest economic sectors. The California State Board of Equalization estimated that in 1998 Laguna Beach businesses generated $240 million in sales, with $186 million from retail alone. One percent of this total amount or $2.4 million was revenue to the City's general fund.

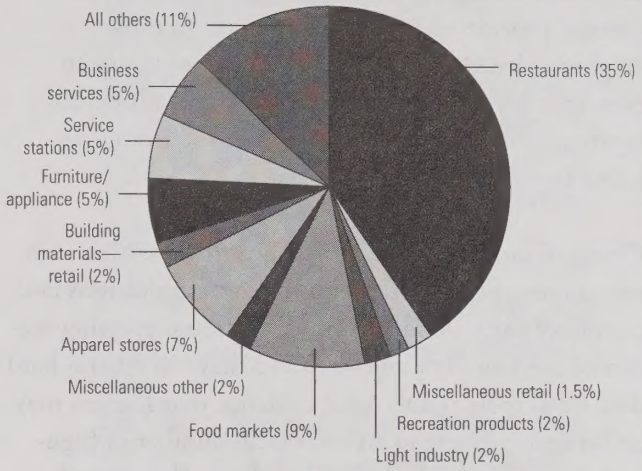


Figure 6
1999 SALES TAX BY ECONOMIC SEGMENT

Source: Laguna Beach Sales Tax Digest, Third Quarter Sales Report, 1999.

The Laguna Beach arts community contributes greatly to the local economy. There are over 80 galleries and 400 registered artists, with an additional 400 artists either living, working, or exhibiting in Laguna Beach. Three major art festivals are held in the city every year, as well as the Laguna Beach Film Festival and the Dance Festival. The Laguna Beach Art Museum, the Art Institute of Southern California, the Laguna Playhouse, and the First Thursday Art Walk provide regular activities for residents and tourists.

Laguna Beach residents work in a diverse number of industries. Figure 7 shows that approximately 48.8% are involved in management or a professional specialty, and an additional 31.3% work as technicians, in sales or in administrative support.[1] In 1998, about 15,660 people over the age of 16 were employed, a number that has grown by 5.6% since 1990.[2] At this time, Laguna Beach enjoys the very low unemployment rate of 0.9%.[3]

Laguna Beach has approximately 2,400 licensed businesses, with 596 new businesses licenses issued since April 1998. As seen in Figure 8, the South Coast Medical Center, the school district, hotels and restaurants, and the municipal government provide the largest number of jobs in Laguna Beach. County-wide, the health industry, including hospitals and medical centers, provide many jobs in addition to those employers listed in Figure 8. The City estimates an even split between home businesses and commercial locations, with the trend increasing to reflect more home-based businesses.

Orange County has one of the most diverse high-tech economies in the nation with telecommunications and computer software identified as the fastest growing sectors of the County's high-tech industry.[4] While no hard data exist, there is anecdotal evidence that Laguna may be becoming home to an increasing number of high-tech businesses in the software, sales, and technical service categories.

By 2020, the County is expected to experience a 70% increase in jobs, with an estimated additional 874,662 jobs created between 1995 and 2020.[5] According to the California Employment Development Department, Orange County employment growth will occur primarily in the service and retail industries, with significant increases in health, computer and airline-related businesses.[6]

Based on a 1999 Consumer Expenditure Survey, Laguna Beach households spend most of their money on food (groceries and restaurants), transportation, clothes and electronics. Keeping in mind that Lagunan's do not buy everything in the City, Figure 9 shows household expenditures by selected store type.

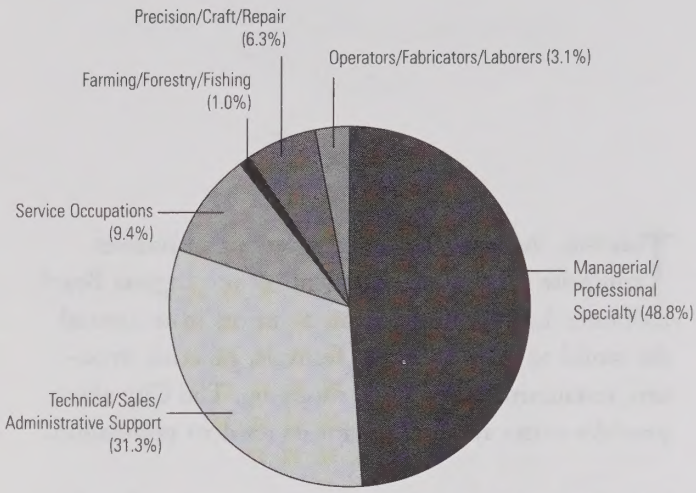


Figure 7
LAGUNA BEACH LABOR FORCE BY OCCUPATION (1990)

Source: U.S. 1990 Census

Figure 8
LOCAL AND REGIONAL EMPLOYERS

Top Laguna Beach Employers	Number of Employees
South Coast Medical Center	565
Surf and Sand Hotel	320
Laguna Beach Unified School District	300
City of Laguna Beach	222
Las Brisas Restaurant	120
Hotel Laguna	120
Top Orange County Employers	
Boeing Co. (Huntington Beach)	6,131
St. John Knits (Irvine)	3,175
Fluor Daniel (Irvine)	2,500
Toshiba American Information Systems (Irvine)	2,400
Hoag Memorial Hospital Presbyterian (Newport Beach)	2,800
Rockwell (Newport Beach)	2,500

Source: *Welcome Home: Southern California Relocation Guide.* 1999. City of Laguna Beach

Figure 9
1999 HOUSEHOLD EXPENDITURES BY SELECTED STORE TYPE
(in thousands of dollars)

Selected Store Type	Expenditure (× $1000)
Building Materials and Supply Store	5,819
Hardware Stores	875
Retail Nursery/Lawn/Garden Supply	1,254
Auto Supply Stores	6,500
Gasoline/Service Stations	24,017
Grocery Stores	54,556
Drug and Proprietary Stores	10,042
Eating Places	40,241
Drinking Places	2194
Department Stores	28,392
Apparel Stores	12,256
Shoe Stores	3015
Furniture	7217
Home Furnishing Stores	4268
Household Appliance Stores	1735
Radio/TV/Computer/Music Stores	7171

Source: Claritas Marketview Comparison Report for Laguna Beach and Orange County. 2000.

Questions to Consider

- ***What decisions can lead to a sustainable, more diversified economic future for the community?***
- ***What role will technology-oriented businesses play in the future? How will this "new economy" impact other aspects of the community?***
- ***What should be Laguna Beach's role in the regional economy?***
- ***What type of jobs do we want? How can we encourage them? What other factors influence job creation?***
- ***How can tourism and resident-serving economic needs be balanced?***
- ***What are the constraints to doing business in Laguna Beach? How do we overcome the constraints?***
- ***What is the impact of the increase in the number of daytrippers and the increase in the number of peak tourist weekends?***
- ***What business activities do we want to encourage/discourage?***

[1] *Marketview Comparison Report for Laguna Beach and Orange County.* Claritas, Inc. 2000.
[2] California State Employment Development Department. March 2000.
[3] California State Employment Development Department. March 2000.
[4] Orange County Community Indicators Report. County of Orange. 1999.
[5] Center for Demographic Research, Cal State Fullerton.
[6] California Employment Development Department, 1995-2002 projections.

The Physical Environment

The City of Laguna Beach, situated on a spectacular stretch of Pacific Coastline, encompasses an 8.7-square mile area unlike any other in Orange County. The area includes secluded beaches, pristine ocean waters, steep hillsides, inaccessible canyon bottoms, prominent ridgelines and vast areas of open space that provide a natural buffer, separating Laguna Beach physically from urbanization occurring elsewhere in the County.

Land Use

Figure 10 illustrates that developed land in Laguna Beach makes up 41% of the total leaving over 59% of the land as recreation/open space and hillsides. Of the developed land, 35% is residential and 4% is commercial/light commercial, including the central business district. Laguna Canyon is the only section of the city zoned for industrial use.

The Laguna Beach General Plan is amended on an ongoing basis. Most recently, in 1998 the City amended the Land Use and Open Space/Conservation Elements, and in 1999 amended the Transportation, Circulation and Growth Management Element.

Over the years, significant zoning changes have taken place, including the reduction of zoning densities by half (1970's), the adoption of more stringent height limitation regulations (1972), the adoption of more restrictive hillside development standards (1989) and prohibition of internally illuminated signs in commercial areas (1983).

Laguna Beach is made up of distinct neighborhoods, defined in part by the natural landscape and the built environment. Each neighborhood is distinct with its own landmarks and local history (see Figure 11). Hillside living is a predominant characteristic of Laguna Beach which makes view preservation an important issue.

Figure 10
LAGUNA BEACH LAND DISTRIBUTION

Land Type	% of Total Land Area
Recreation/open space and hillsides	59%
Residential	35%
Central Business District	2%
Commercial/light commercial	2%
Industrial	1%
Institutional	1%

Source: City of Laguna Beach

Although residential development dominates within the City, a number of significant commercial projects are currently underway. One of these is the Treasure Island Resort, which has recently been approved by the City Council and City voters and is under review by the Coastal Commission. The project proposes the conversion of a 30-acre, closed mobile home park to a new resort community with 275 rooms, restaurants, health spa and meeting rooms. The project also includes 17 single-family homes and 14 condominiums and provides public access to beaches and a park with a bluff walkway.[1] The redevelopment of the Boat Canyon Shopping Center in North Laguna is also underway.

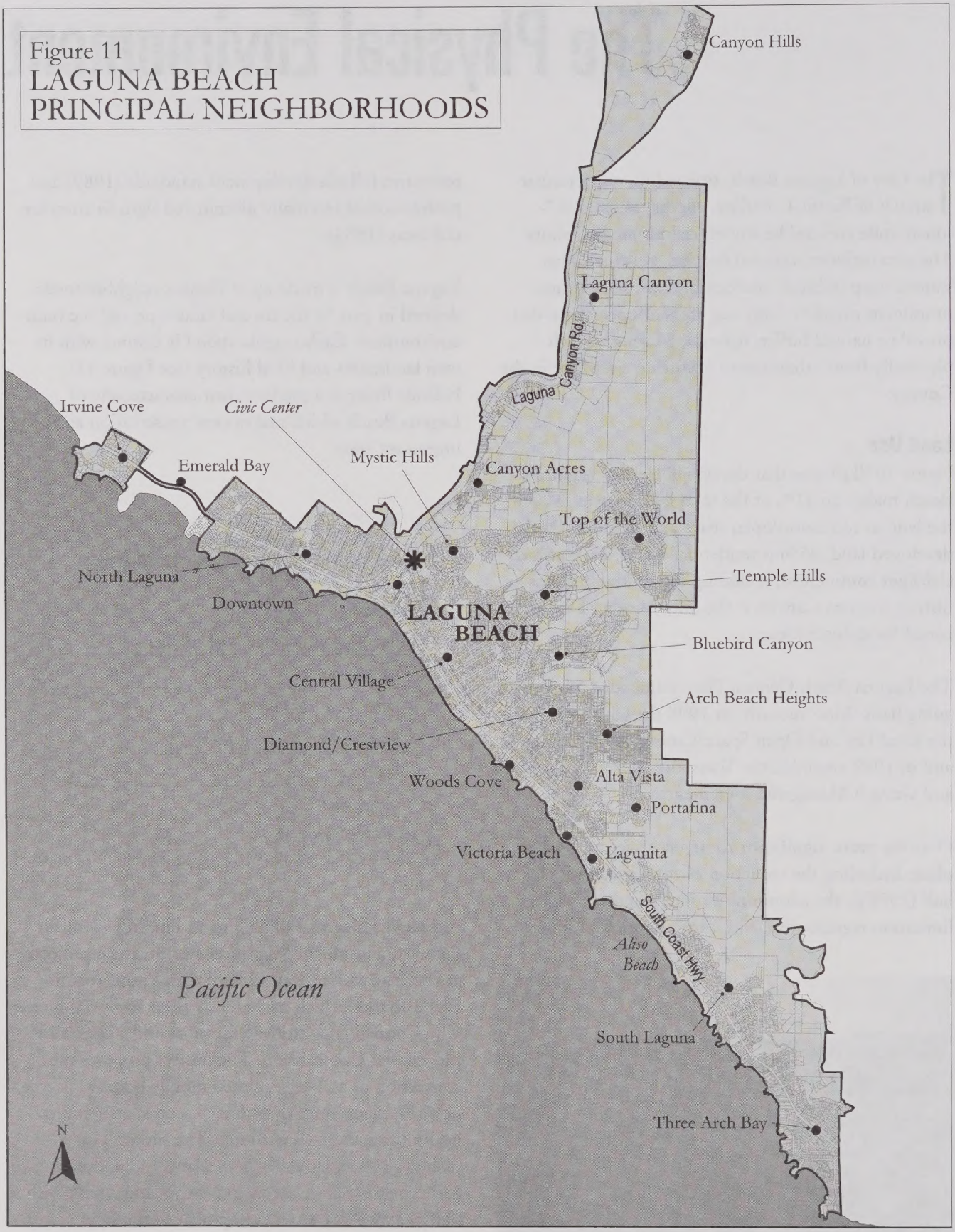


Figure 11
LAGUNA BEACH
PRINCIPAL NEIGHBORHOODS
Canyon Hills
Laguna Canyon
Laguna Canyon Rd.
Irvine Cove
Civic Center
Emerald Bay
Mystic Hills
Canyon Acres
Top of the World
North Laguna
Downtown
LAGUNA BEACH
Temple Hills
Bluebird Canyon
Central Village
Arch Beach Heights
Diamond/Crestview
Woods Cove
Alta Vista
Portafina
Victoria Beach
Lagunita
South Coast Hwy
Aliso Beach
Pacific Ocean
South Laguna
Three Arch Bay
N

Downtown

Laguna Beach's Downtown functions as the commercial, economic and social center of the community. Steep topography and the Pacific shoreline partially isolates the Downtown physically and enhances its identity as the town's focal point. The village-scale shopping district provides a place for a significant amount of retail and tourist pedestrian activity. The Downtown encompasses a broad range of businesses including restaurants, art galleries and boutiques. The age, architectural style and size of downtown buildings vary considerably, adding richness and vitality to the area.

Many older residential and commercial buildings have been renovated for office and professional uses and have replaced older nonconforming commercial buildings with more modern facilities. The remaining residential uses in the City are primarily located on the outside fringes of the Downtown area.

Housing

Laguna Beach has nearly 13,000 housing units within the City limits of which about 7,700 are single-family, detached and 5,000 are multi-family units. There are 2 mobile home parks in the City. In general, Laguna Beach is a city of homeowners, with 6,628 or 86% of its single-family homes owner-occupied and nearly 32% of the occupants having lived in their homes longer than 10 years.[2]

Median home prices have increased sharply over time. In 1970, the median home price was $38,600.[2] By 1980, the value had risen to over $200,000 and by 1990 to $471,000.[3] Since 1990, prices have continued to increase, especially in the last 3-4 years. By the year ending April 2000, the median home price had grown to $579,000, based on the sales of 565 homes within the corporate boundaries of Laguna Beach. Similarly, rental prices have increased with today's average rent for a studio apartment being $743 and $2,098 for a three-bedroom unit. However, paying $3,500 a month in rent is not unheard of in some parts of Laguna Beach.[4]

Figure 12 illustrates the recent growth in the number of housing units in Laguna Beach as well as in surrounding jurisdictions. While the average increase of all jurisdictions from 1990 to 1999 was 12%, the increase for Laguna Beach was only 1.6%, representing at the

most several hundred new homes. Instead, the City has experienced significant infill development and renovations to existing properties. Figure 13 shows the annual number of building plan checks over the last 15 years including both new construction and renovations. It also illustrates the dramatic increase in building activity over the last three years. As a side note, in 1983, the Laguna Beach General Plan suggested that recycling and redeveloping existing properties would affect the supply and demand for housing, impose an additional burden on the City's infrastructure and services, and change the City's physical character.

Artists, students and seniors in Laguna Beach have always needed affordable housing. As the economy changes, many other people, particularly service industry employees and young people also need affordable

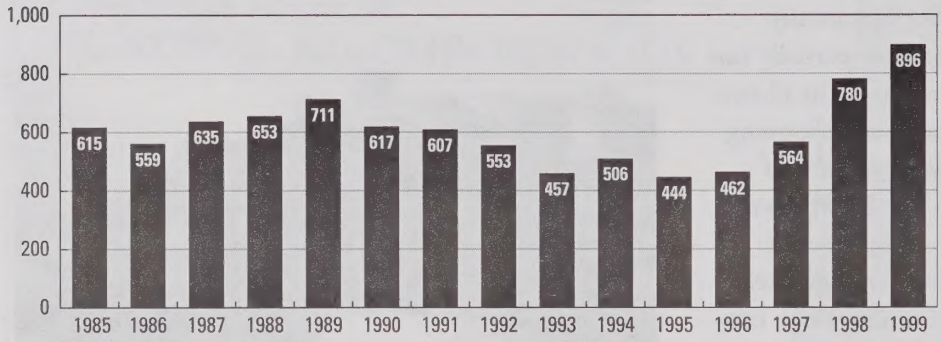
Figure 12
HOUSING UNIT GROWTH BY JURISDICTION

	1990 Units	1999 Units	% Change
Aliso Viejo*	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dana Point	14,666	15,686	7.0%
Irvine	42,221	48,764	15.5%
Laguna Beach	12,846	13,049	1.6%
Laguna Niguel	18,992	23,372	23.0%
Newport Beach	34,861	37,044	6.3%
Orange County	875,105	954,882	9.1%

* Few statistics exist for Aliso Viejo due to its status as an unincorporated area.

Source: Center for Demographic Research, Cal State Fullerton. November 1999

Figure 13:
ANNUAL NUMBER OF BUILDING PLAN CHECKS



Source: City of Laguna Beach

housing. As stated in the *Housing Element of the Laguna Beach General Plan,* the City seeks to provide housing that is sufficiently diversified in cost, size, type and tenure to meet the needs of all Laguna Beach households. However, because home prices have risen substantially in Laguna and affordable housing is limited, many potential residents are displaced to more affordable communities. The City is currently reviewing proposals for construction of low-to-moderate income housing in the vicinity of the City's downtown.

Transportation

Access to Laguna Beach has always been limited. In recent years, however, new toll roads have dramatically increased access to Laguna Beach for Orange County residents as well as out-of-county residents. Laguna Canyon Road with two lanes and the Pacific Coast Highway (PCH) with four lanes provide the only direct access to the City. Laguna Canyon Road connects the Pacific Coastline and the interior region, and serves as one major gateway to the City. The Pacific Coast Highway is the north/south connector to other coastal cities and provides the other two gateways. The newly constructed San Joaquin Hills Tollway or State Route 73 is a wide, 6-lane highway connecting Irvine with the south county cities. For the month of April 2000, the Toll Road Authority reported an average of 75,000 transactions per day on this road.[5] Another new 6-lane toll road, the Eastern Toll Road, connects Laguna Canyon Road to Riverside and San Bernardino Counties through the Cleveland National Forest. This was opened approximately one year ago.

As population and development continue to increase, traffic congestion creates an ever increasing negative impact on the quality of life in Laguna Beach. Traffic "problem areas" are concentrated along Laguna Canyon Road, along PCH, at the intersection of the PCH and Laguna Canyon Road, and in the City's downtown. Residential neighborhoods adjacent to the PCH also experience congestion during peak commuter and tourist traffic hours. Laguna Beach used to experience high traffic volume days only during the peak summer weekends. But more and more non-summer weekends are experiencing high traffic volumes as more tourists visit the City year-round. The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) identifies both Laguna Canyon Road and portions of the PCH as areas of extreme congestion resulting in a significant increase in travel time.

The traffic counts shown in Figure 14 suggest that, during the eight-year period from 1990 to 1998, overall traffic volume based on *annual average daily counts* has not varied much on either Laguna Canyon Road or Pacific Coast Highway. The same appears to be true for volumes during *peak months.* However, on both roads there appears to have been about a 10% decrease in *peak hour* volumes during 1997 and 1998. This suggests that while the opening of the San Joaquin Toll road has increased access to Laguna Beach, it may also have relieved congestion during commuter hours by providing regional traffic with a more preferred route other than Laguna Canyon Road and Pacific Coast highway. Traffic data for 1999 and 2000 is not yet available to determine if this trend is continuing. In addition, the impact of the recently opened Eastern Toll Road extension easterly of Laguna Canyon Road is still unknown. The anecdotal evidence of the last year is that the additional access it has created may result in a significant increase in the number of visits to Laguna from the Riverside, San Bernardino County and North Orange County area, especially during off peak summer months. OCTA plans to widen Laguna Canyon Road north of El Toro Road by 2003 to accommodate the existing and anticipated traffic flow in that area.[6]

Figure 14
TRAFFIC VOLUME ON LAGUNA CANYON ROAD

HWY 1 AT BROADWAY

		Average Daily Trips	
Year	Peak/Hour	Peak/Month	Annual
1990	2,950	50,000	40,500
1991	2,950	39,500	36,500
1992	3,200	39,500	36,500
1993	3,300	41,500	38,000
1994	3,200	39,500	36,500
1995	3,300	41,500	38,000
1996	3,200	39,500	36,500
1997	3,200	41,500	39,000
1998	3,350	41,500	39,000

HWY 133 AT EL TORO

		Average Daily Trips	
Year	Peak/Hour	Peak/Month	Annual
1990	3,500	41,500	35,000
1991	3,500	41,500	35,000
1992	3,500	41,500	35,000
1993	3,600	42,500	36,000
1994	4,500	53,000	45,000
1995	3,600	42,500	36,000
1996	3,600	42,500	36,000
1997	3,400	44,500	40,000
1998	3,250	42,500	38,000

Source: State of California Department of Transportation

Projected population growth in Orange County will result in additional traffic. By the year 2020, OCTA expects a 43% increase in the number of total vehicle miles traveled on freeways and streets within the county every day. Residents and visitors will experience increased congestion, longer commute times and reduced travel speeds. Today most Laguna Beach residents travel 15 or more minutes to reach their employment destinations, but eighteen percent travel more than 45 minutes to work.[7] While automobile travel will continue to be the primary modal choice, larger portions of travelers are expected to carpool, ride transit, use telecommunication/work-at-home opportunities and use non-motorized transportation modes such as biking and walking.[8]

Parking

The City has engaged in considerable discussion with regard to the number of parking spaces that exist in the City's downtown area. Resident shoppers, local employees, beach visitors, festival visitors and out-of-town shoppers all vie for the approximate 1,900 available parking spaces. During the summer months, the City operates the "festival tram service" and provides some seasonal parking along Laguna Canyon Road. The City encourages motorists to park in the City's periphery and tram into the downtown to attend the art festivals and other recreational activities. There has also been discussion regarding the construction of additional parking at the vicinity of the City's art festivals.

Transit

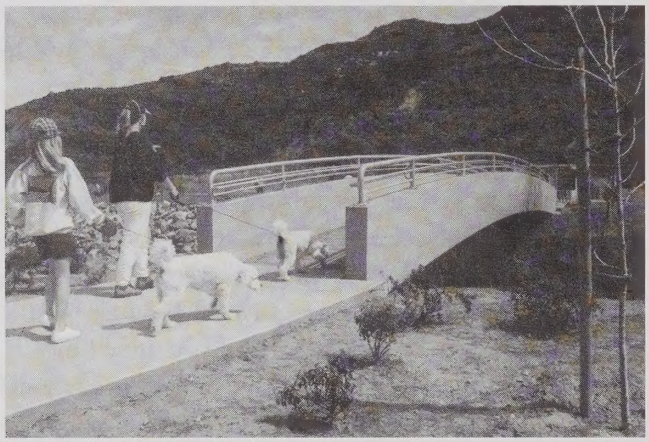
Laguna Beach Transit, operated by the City, provides bus service to the community. Service is within walking distance of nearly 90% of the developed areas in the City. The Green Line serves North Laguna, Laguna Canyon and Top of the World, while the Blue Line serves Arch Beach Heights and Bluebird Canyon, and the Red Line runs between the Downtown area and the Ritz Carlton Hotel in Dana Point. The buses accommodate wheelchairs, bikes and surfboards. In fiscal year 1998-99, Laguna Beach Transit reported 106,118 riders.

OCTA serves Laguna Beach with the #89 line, which runs from Laguna Hills through Laguna Canyon to Newport Beach from 5:30am to 10:00pm. The #1 line runs from San Clemente through Laguna Beach to

Long Beach. OCTA reported an 8.4% decline in passengers between 1996 and 1998.[9]

Bicycle and pedestrian system

Laguna Beach offers a wide range of bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Laguna Canyon Road and the Pacific Coast Highway are Class II Bikeways providing some on-road striped areas for riding. Aliso/Wood Canyons Regional Park provides a Class I off-road bikeway connecting to the Cleveland National Forest and has proposed connections to the Pacific Ocean. Crystal Cove State Beach has a proposed bikeway.



For those on foot, Laguna Beach has many attractive features. Pedestrians can easily explore the Downtown area, walk miles of ocean bluffs and beaches, and hike on dozens of trails located throughout the designated open space. The Downtown is a pedestrian-oriented area where people see friends, shop, enjoy public art and browse storefronts, and enjoy food and drink. Heisler Park offers walkways along the ocean bluffs, providing spectacular views and public access to many of the beaches and coves along the rocky coast.

Geology and topography

Once a tidal marsh and small delta, the City of Laguna Beach lies within an area characterized by three separate geomorphic regions: Coastal Fringe, Hillside Canyons, High Terrace Lands, and the Central Basin. The Coastal Fringe is the site of unusual rock formations, small pocket beaches and steep cliffs ranging in height from a few feet to over 100 feet above sea level. The inland hillside canyons and high terrace lands which rise to over 1,000 feet above sea level were initially formed by geomorphic uplifting of the San Joaquin Hills and subsequent stream cutting, which created steep slopes and exposed bedrock. The Central Basin provides a nearly level expanse of land at the confluence of Laguna Canyon and the Pacific Ocean.[10]

The hills surrounding Laguna Beach form a dramatic visual backdrop for the community. While Laguna residents enjoy the benefits of hillside living and the surrounding open spaces, they also experience landslides and fires associated with those natural features. Four major landslides have occurred during the past five years some of which resulted in the death of two of its residents. In 1978, Laguna Beach also experienced a serious landslide in Bluebird Canyon that destroyed 24 homes. The October 1993 firestorm spread from the hillsides to residential areas and damaged and/or destroyed over 400 homes.

The City of Laguna Beach lies in a seismically active zone vulnerable to ground shaking and related geologic hazards. The three major faults in the region are: Newport-Inglewood, San Jacinto, and San Andreas. Locally, Laguna Beach has two major fault systems: Laguna Canyon and Temple Hills. Technically, both of these faults are inactive, which means that geological evidence shows that no motion has occurred for 11,000 to three million years.[11]

Biological Resources

Laguna Beach abounds with valuable biological resources. It encompasses 15 different biotic communities or habitats.[12]

Hillsides

The primary vegetation type in the hillsides and canyons is coastal sage scrub, named for the community of low-growing, fragrant shrubs and other plants found in the area. Within the coastal sage are 100 specialized plants and animals that exist nowhere else and would disappear if the scrub were eliminated.[13] Currently, 38 plant species and 32 animal species identified as endangered, rare or distributionally restricted are at least partially protected in the natural open space system in and around Laguna Beach.[14]

Open space

Laguna pioneered the preservation of open space in southern Orange County and now maintains an extensive greenbelt of open space and parks in and around the city. The open space system intends to preserve natural resources including habitats for plant and animal life, provide outdoor recreation opportunities and provide for better public safety.

Within Laguna Beach 1,065 acres are preserved as open space in the city's hillsides and canyons.[15] The City also has approximately 99 acres of parks and recreational areas. In addition, the surrounding hillsides, located outside the city limits, but within the city planning area, are a major part of the community's open space. Figures 15A and 15B provide an overview of all the open space in the area.

Over the last 30 years, Lagunans have witnessed extensive collaboration between federal and state wildlife agencies, county and city governments, major landowners and the environmental community in an effort to conserve open space and provide recreational access. Some of the accomplishments include the approval of the Laguna Greenbelt, the City's purchase of the James Dilley Preserve, the dedication of Aliso and Wood Canyons Regional Park, and Crystal Cove State Park. In addition, citizens played a critical role in the purchase and dedication of South Coast Wilderness Park by approving a $20 million bond. In the future, the Treasure Island development will also include a bluff top park.

In 1989, the Laguna Biological Resources Inventory recommended that open space management in Laguna Beach address a variety of land use issues including recreational activities within the future regional parkland, development step-outs in Laguna Canyon, utility infrastructure access, flood control and water quality in Laguna Canyon Creek and efficient traffic flow on Laguna Canyon Road. The City's Open Space Committee is currently reviewing the existing Master Plan of Hiking Trails and updating the Open Space element of the General Plan.

The Pacific Ocean

The Pacific Ocean, or "Blue Belt" provides a spectacular backdrop for Laguna Beach 6.3 miles of City coastline. Considered part of the open space system, the entire coastline is designated as a marine life refuge, allowing only game fishing and recreational sports. The Glenn E. Vedder Ecological Reserve is a protected reserve for marine life, plants, shells and rocks, located at the north section of Main Beach to Divers Cove Point. The entire City of Laguna Beach was designated as a bird sanctuary over 20 years ago. The Marine Mammals Protection Act guards the many seal lions who frequent Seal Rock and other similar coastal areas.

Laguna Beach residents share a concern for the quality of the ocean's water. Consequently, the City focuses on repairing existing sewer lines and diverting summer nuisance flows. Recently, the City Council appointed a citizen's committee to develop a report on ways to improve water quality. The Orange County Health Department, the agency responsible for water testing, recently adopted more stringent statewide standards for issuing public warnings when water quality is poor.

Climate

Laguna Beach enjoys the mild and pleasant Pacific Coastal climate. Annual rainfall averages 12.89 inches. It can rain at any time of year, but most rain occurs in the winter months. In 1997-1998, the City experienced average annual rainfall of 35.07 inches, the highest ever recorded. It almost never snows. In the summer, temperatures average 59-77, and in the winter they average 43-66. Sea breezes are common and keep the City's air clean.[16] Because Laguna Beach is surrounded by steep terrain, it has a more moderate microclimate that is markedly different from the areas just a short distance inland.

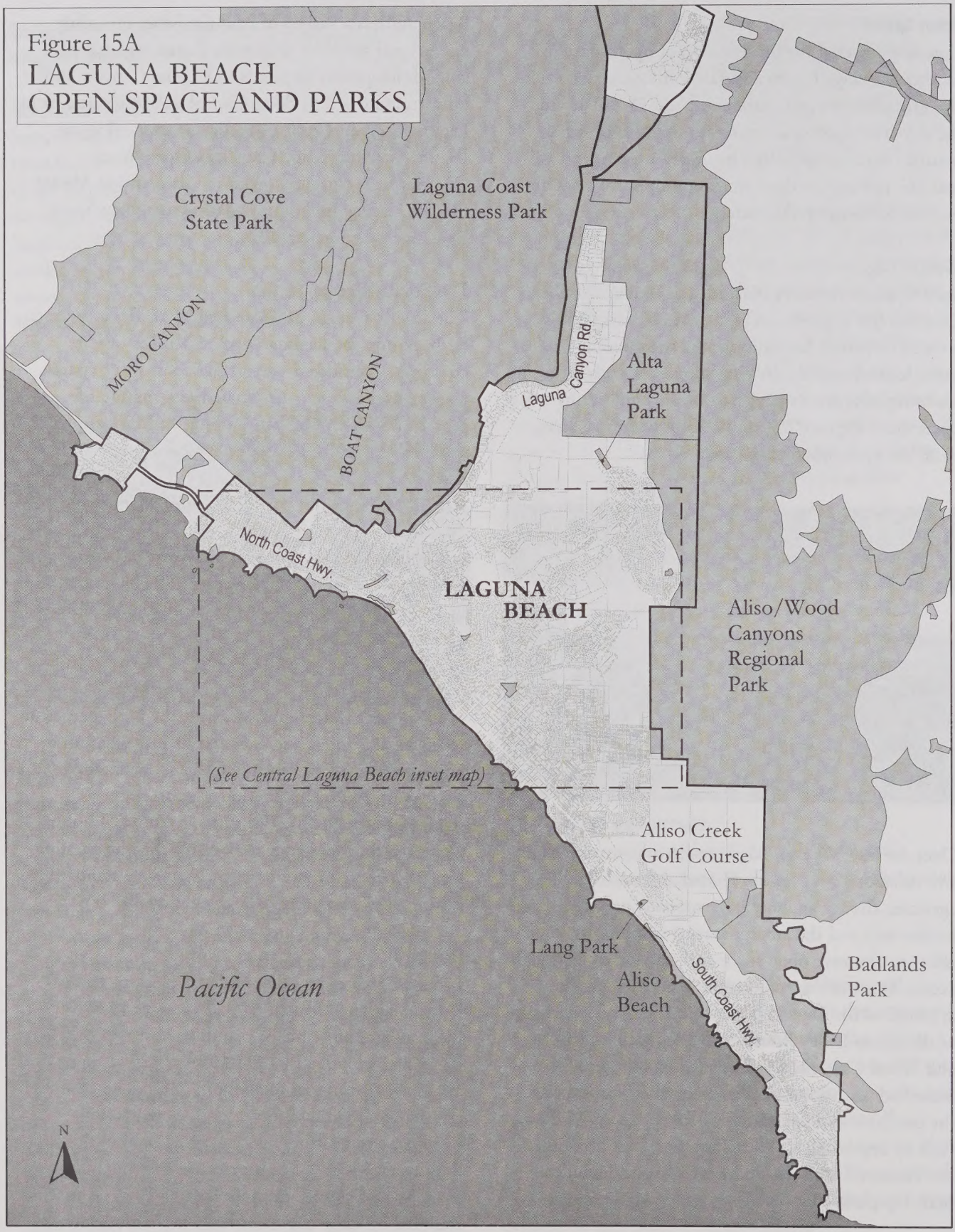


Figure 15A
LAGUNA BEACH
OPEN SPACE AND PARKS
Crystal Cove
State Park
Laguna Coast
Wilderness Park
MORO CANYON
BOAT CANYON
Laguna Canyon Rd.
Alta
Laguna
Park
North Coast Hwy.
LAGUNA
BEACH
Aliso/Wood
Canyons
Regional
Park
(See Central Laguna Beach inset map)
Aliso Creek
Golf Course
Lang Park
Aliso
Beach
South Coast Hwy.
Badlands
Park
Pacific Ocean
N

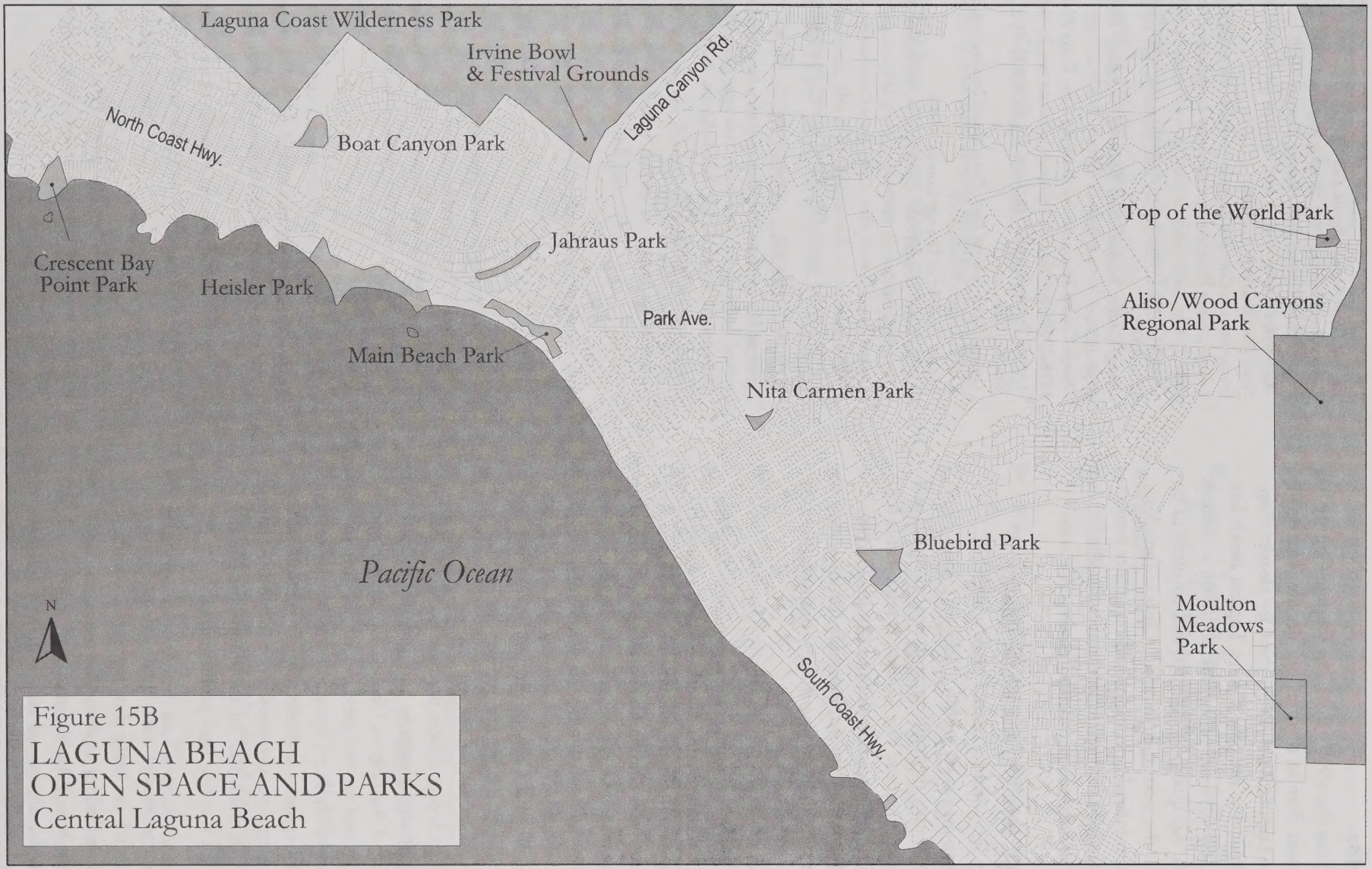


Figure 15B
LAGUNA BEACH
OPEN SPACE AND PARKS
Central Laguna Beach

Air quality

Throughout the 1990's the air in Orange County has been cleaner than in the previous decade. The ocean breeze in Laguna Beach keeps the City cleaner than inland areas. For the past 9 years, Laguna Beach has not had any days exceeding federal carbon monoxide standards. Air quality is expected and required to be cleaner in the next millennium.[17] Cleaner fuels for vehicles, industrial operations and consumer projects will be needed to successfully reduce air pollution especially as the region's population grows.

Drainage, Flooding and Water Quality

The City lies within a coastal plain while the Downtown area is set within a 100-year flood plain. Drainage occurs through storm drains, channels and natural watercourses. The County is responsible for most of the improved part of the Laguna Canyon Channel and the City is responsible for the rest of the drainage system, excluding the few drains located on the state highways.

Laguna Beach sits within two watersheds—Laguna Canyon Creek and Aliso Creek—which together accommodate the local drainage from the Santa Ana Mountains. The Laguna Canyon Channel originates in the Irvine area. The Aliso Creek, the largest regional creek, drains 75 square miles of densely populated land including Laguna Niguel, Laguna Hills, Lake Forest and Aliso Woods. Consequently, the County designated Aliso Creek as one of its most polluted waterways.[18]

Laguna Beach experiences periodic flooding problems due to channel deficiencies and undersized drains. The deficiency of the Laguna Canyon Channel in the downtown and canyon areas caused flooding in 1995, 1997 and 1998. The City, the County and the Army Corps of Engineers are currently cooperating on a project to improve the downtown portion of the channel. The city has submitted an application for County funding for the upstream problem area.

The major sources of water quality degradation in Laguna Beach are brake dust from cars, commercial activities, including washing down of commercial equipment into storm drains, urban residue such as pesticides, herbicides, oil and trash, and deficient water conservation practices.[19]

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[1] *Laguna Beach Annual Report.* Fall 1999.
[2] *Laguna Beach General Plan Housing Element.* 1990.
[3] *Laguna Beach General Plan Housing Element.* 1990.
[4] *"Affordable Housing: Is there any?"* Barbara Diamond. Laguna News-Post. February 3, 2000.
[5] Transportation Corridor Agencies website (www.tollroad.com)
[6] *Orange County Transportation Authority Long Range Plan,* FY 1998-2020.
[7] *Orange County Transportation Authority Long Range Plan,* FY 1998-2020.
[8] *Orange County Transportation Authority Long Range Plan,* FY 1998-2020.
[9] *Orange County Transportation Authority Long Range Plan,* FY 1998-2020.
[10] *Laguna Beach General Plan, Land Use Element.* City of Laguna Beach. 1983.
[11] *Laguna Beach General Plan, Open Space/Conservation Element.* City of Laguna Beach. 1998.
[12] Nature Preserve of Orange County, 1999.
[13] *Laguna Beach General Plan, Open Space/Conservation Element.* City of Laguna Beach. 1998.
[14] *Laguna Beach General Plan, Open Space/Conservation Element,* 1998
[15] Laguna Beach General Plan, Open Space/Conservation Element. 1998.
[16] Orange County Climate Archives, 2000.
[17] *Tracking Orange County: a pilot report reviewing social, environmental, and economic performance indicators.* Center for Demographic Research, Cal State Fullerton. November 1999.
[18] City of Laguna Beach, 2000.
[19] City of Laguna Beach, 2000.

Questions to Consider

LAND USE

- *What land use opportunities and constraints exist for Downtown, Laguna Canyon, the length of Pacific Coast Highway, South Laguna, Arch Beach Heights and other areas?*
- *Are there redevelopment opportunities in the City? Where and for what type of new uses?*
- *Where and how should future growth occur?*
- *What land use decisions can lead to a more sustainable future for the community?*
- *How will the City approach potential new development from the direction of the Ocean given the advancement in construction technology as is being experienced in other parts of the world?*
- *What can we learn from the divisive experience of Treasure Island in terms of future growth and development?*
- *What hillside parcels do we want to preserve?*

HOUSING

- *How should new residential growth and infill development be accommodated? Given the limitations on existing land, should higher densities of housing be encouraged, or discouraged?*
- *What is the long-term impact of larger homes on smaller lots? How can we preserve bungalows, cottages and other heritage buildings?*
- *How can we ensure that our children do not have to leave Laguna Beach due to increased housing costs?*
- *How do we provide affordable housing for artists, seniors and other low income groups?*
- *Should Laguna Beach provide more affordable housing for tourism industry workers?*

TRANSPORTATION

- *What improvements are needed along Laguna Canyon Road and the Pacific Coast Highway?*
- *What are the highest priorities for future bikeways?*
- *Is increased bus transit a viable option? What can be done to improve use or service?*
- *What can be done to handle traffic problems during peak weekends? Where are the greatest problems?*
- *How can we promote more pedestrian usage Downtown?*
- *How can resident parking needs be accommodated?*
- *What will be the future impact of new tollroads as they become more heavily used?*

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

- *What type of restoration and/or protection is appropriate along the streams and creeks?*
- *Is the City adequately prepared for fire and flooding?*
- *How should urban runoff be dealt with? How should public habits change?*
- *How can we protect the water quality of the ocean?*
- *How can we replenish and protect the intertidal zone?*
- *What measures will we take to address future air quality issues, particularly as related to proposals for more development, more airports, more roads, and more industry?*

Community Facilities and Services

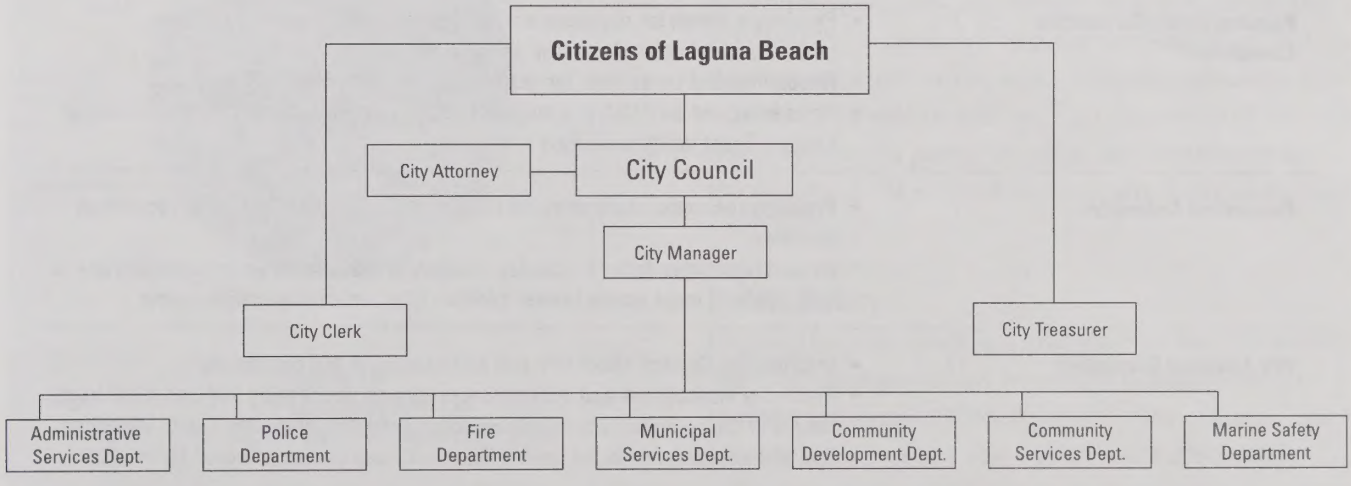
Laguna Beach has an active local government, citizenry and nonprofit sector that together provide a wide array of community facilities and services. The City of Laguna Beach is a full-service municipality providing general government services, police and fire services, roads, wastewater, land use, park and recreation programs, and much more. Citizens serve on numerous boards and actively voice their ideas and concerns on many important issues. The nonprofit sector covers many areas and often collaborates with government to further serve the residents of Laguna Beach and its visitors.

City Governance

The City of Laguna Beach operates under the Council-Manager form of government. A five-member City Council is elected at large, each member serving a four-year term. The Council is responsible for the legislative functions of the City, while the City Manager oversees all administrative operations. With the exception of the elected City Clerk and City Treasurer, each City Department Head reports to the City Manager who, in turn, reports to the City Council. The City is organized into seven major departments as shown in Figure 16.

In order to secure community input, the City Council appoints residents to serve on 12 standing committees and commissions, which advise the Council on everything from the arts to open space. (Figure 17 shows the City's standing committees and commissions and the recent accomplishments of each body.) In all, over 70 citizens serve on City committees. The City Council also seeks community input at bi-monthly city council meetings and through the City web site. The City sends the Laguna Beach Annual Report to all households to keep residents apprised of current events and of the City's accomplishments and financial status.

Figure 16
CITY ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



Source: City of Laguna Beach

Figure 17
CITY OF LAGUNA BEACH COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS

Appointed Committees and Commissions	Members	Committee Purpose and Recent Accomplishments
Planning Commission	5	• Provides a public forum for issues related to land use planning • Reviews proposed City ordinances, and other development related issues • Reviews applications for conditional use permits, subdivisions, general plan amendments, and specific plans
Arts Commission	7	• Makes recommendations to the City about Art in Public Places projects and runs annual events • Completed mural on Forest Lane • Installed three artists' designed public benches • Installed public art in Heisler Park
Design Review Board Board of Adjustment/	5	• Reviews and approves or disapproves over 500 projects each year. These projects include signage, building remodels, and residential and commercial development • Worked with the Planning Commission in the review and approval of the Treasure Island Resort project and the Boat Canyon shopping center project
Telecommunications Committee	7	• Provides advice to City Council regarding cable TV service and technology in general • Publishes bimonthly community newsletter focusing on technology issues
Heritage Committee	7	• Reviews modifications to existing historic structures for consistency with the historic preservation ordinance • Organizes walking tours of historic homes, Heritage Month activities and celebrations in May
Housing and Human Affairs Committee	7	• Provided recommendations to the City Council regarding affordable housing at 450 Glenneyre and a day labor hiring site
Open Space Committee	7	• Provides recommendations to the City Council regarding open space use and preservation • Identified, catalogued and mapped an inventory of all city-owned property with emphasis on open space • Currently mapping City's trail system and updating Master Plan for hiking trails
Parking/Traffic/Circulation Committee	7	• Provides a forum for residents and others to voice concerns regarding pedestrian and vehicular traffic and safety • Recommended cross walk for students at Thurston Middle School • Recommended an OCTA bus stop on Laguna Canyon Road to provide access to Laguna Coast Wilderness Park
Recreation Committee	7	• Provides recommendations to the City Council regarding parks and recreation facilities • Recent recommendations includes location of skateboard park; expanded use of play fields by local sports teams; addition of a community/senior center
HIV Advisory Committee	17	• Informs City Council about HIV and AIDS issues in the community • Promotes educational and informative programs concerning HIV and AIDS health issues in the community to help ensure the provision of quality health care/medical and social services for people living with and people affected by HIV/AIDS

The City Council and the City of Laguna Beach also work with other commissions, agencies and boards such as the California Coastal Commission, Orange County Transportation Authority, Regional Water Quality Board (San Diego and Santa Ana), Southern California Association of Governments, and the South Coast Air Quality Management District.

The City's Budget and Finances

For fiscal year 1999-2000, the City government has an annual operating budget of $30 million, 222 full-time employees, and a capital budget of $4.8 million.

Figures 18 and 19 illustrate the breakdown of anticipated citywide revenues and expenditures in 1999-2000. On the expenditures side, the three departments with the largest general fund budgets are police services (27%), municipal services (25%) and fire protection (20%). Property tax (39%) continues to be the largest source of revenue, while fees-for-service (14%), sales tax (13%), and transient lodging tax (13%) also contribute substantially to City revenues.

The City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) includes major projects to replace or construct the public infrastructure, including streets, sewers, civic buildings, parks, street lights and storm drains. Due to ongoing flooding problems, the current CIP emphasizes improving the City's storm drainage systems. The City is also focused on improving public restroom maintenance and repairing existing sewer lines. The ten-year Capital Improvement Plan has a $41 million budget.[1]

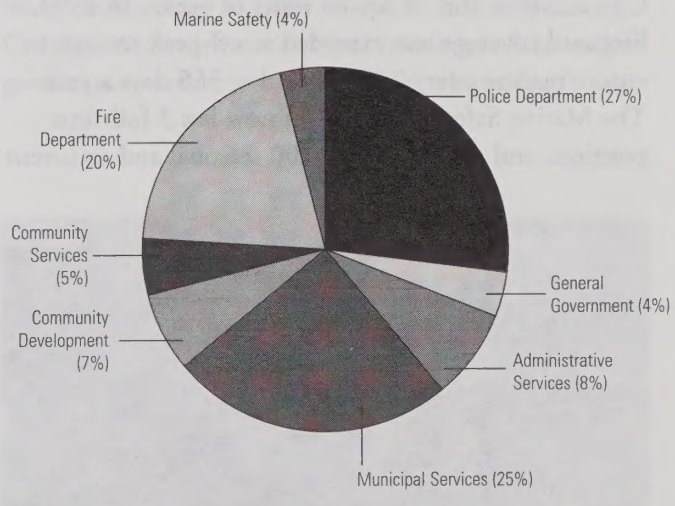


Figure 18
CITY OF LAGUNA BEACH
EXPENDITURE BY DEPARTMENT (FY 2000)

Source: City of Laguna Beach

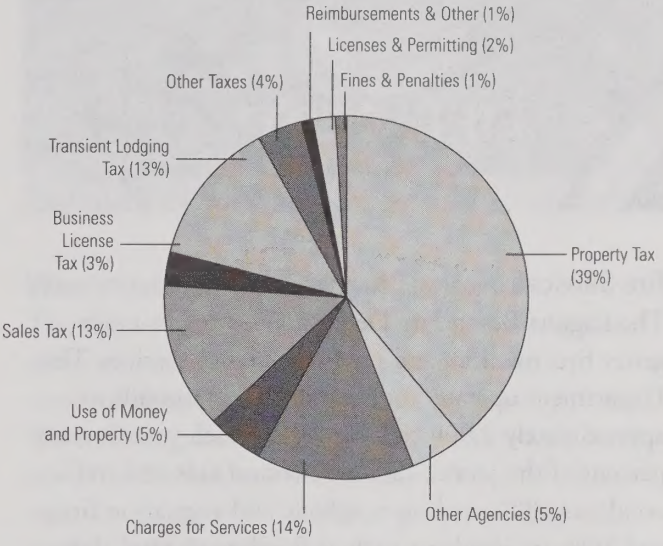


Figure 19
CITY OF LAGUNA BEACH
REVENUE BY SOURCE (FY 2000)

Source: City of Laguna Beach

Community Organizations

The quality of life in Laguna Beach is greatly enhanced by the community spirit of its residents. The number of service organizations that have been founded here in the last thirty years admirably demonstrates this. Today, over 30 neighborhood associations and over 100 community organizations address everything from environmental issues and the arts to homelessness and HIV/AIDS.[2] Indeed, without the active support of a large cross-section of residents, these organizations would not be able to survive. This generosity of spirit not only benefits people in crisis, but contributes to the quality of life enjoyed by the community as a whole.

Public Safety

Overall, Laguna Beach is a safe place to live. However, the City has experienced numerous natural disasters over the last decade. Consequently, crisis planning has become an important activity to ensure continued public safety.

Fire Services

The Laguna Beach Fire Department provides emergency fire, medical, and public assistance services. The Department operates four stations and responds to approximately 2,000 calls for service each year. Seventy percent of the service calls are medical aids and traffic accidents, 20% are house, vehicle and vegetation fires, and 10% are incidents such as flooding or mud slides. The Department maintains a fully-equipped emergency response force with a minimum of twelve firefighters on duty at all times for a total of 39 employees assigned to suppression, 5 assigned to management and administrative support, and 15 to reserve duties. Twelve of the above personnel are trained paramedics.[3]

Recent fire and flooding have spurred the formation of public safety prevention and planning programs throughout the City. The Fire Department's Weed Abatement Division oversees a program to reduce fire hazards that result from uncontrolled vegetation growth. Goats are used to reduce the fuel loading on public and private properties. The City has developed a community evacuation plan and there are plans to build a radio tower at Moorhead Reservoir that will transmit a countywide safety radio band.[4]

Police Services

The Laguna Beach Police Department, headquartered at City Hall in Downtown Laguna Beach, is divided into three divisions: field services, investigative services and support services. It has a staff of 82 personnel, with 49 sworn police officers. The department prides itself on following the principles of community-oriented policing and provides an array of programs designed to maintain personal and property safety.[5] Some of the programs include community beach patrol, neighborhood watch, parking enforcement, and youth diversion. The Police Department also staffs and operates the City's animal shelter and animal services activities. As Figure 20 suggests, Laguna Beach has experienced a 55% decrease in reported crimes over the five-year period 1993-1998.

Figure 20
LAGUNA BEACH CRIME STATISTICS (1993-1998)

Crime	1993	1998	Change
Homicide/Manslaughter	0	2	+2
Rape	5	5	0
Robbery	22	8	-14
Aggravated Assault	165	51	-114
Burglary	417	182	-235
Larceny	881	445	-436
Grand Theft Auto	146	36	-110
Arson	3	5	+2
TOTAL	1639	734	-905

Source: Laguna Beach 1999 Annual Report

Marine Safety

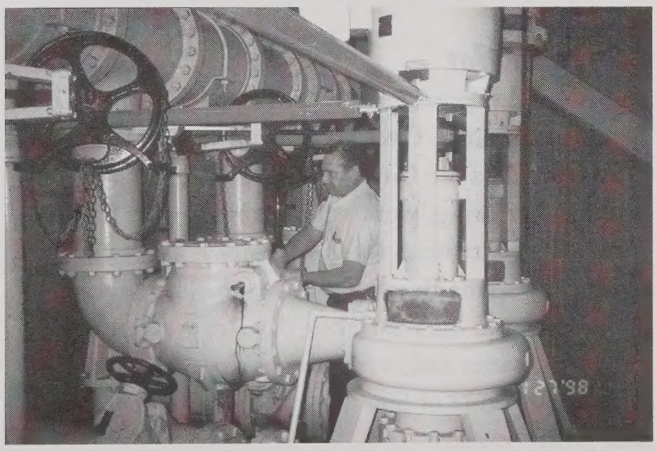
As a seaside community, the City of Laguna Beach Marine Safety Department must patrol 4.7 miles of City coastline and 14 square miles of ocean. In 1998, lifeguard coverage was extended to off-peak seasons to ensure marine safety 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The Marine Safety Department now has 3 full-time positions and approximately 100 seasonal and recurrent

positions. Marine Safety's primary duties include ocean rescue, emergency medical treatment, prevention, enforcement and public assistance. During an average year, Marine Safety personnel rescue 1,500 beach-goers and give medical attention to another 2,500 people. Aside from providing year-round service, the Department runs the Junior Lifeguard Program and contracts lifeguard services to Irvine Cove communities during summer, fall and spring, and to commercial film shoots along the coastline. The Marine Safety Department also operates the Main Beach Tower, a favorite Laguna Beach landmark.[6]

Water Supply

Two water districts serve the residents of Laguna Beach. The Laguna Beach County Water District (LBCWD), serves the area north of Nyes Place while the City contracts with the South Coast Water District (SCWD) for water and sewer services south of Nyes Place. The LBCWD will soon become a subsidiary district of the City with the Laguna Beach City Council acting as the Water District Board. The existing LBCWD Board of Directors will become the District's Water Commission.

Current demand for water is approximately 4 million gallons/day, with demand projected to reach 5.5 million gallons/day by 2020. The LBCWD maintains 23 reservoirs and is currently constructing a 5 million gallon underground reservoir in North Laguna, which will bring total storage capacity up to 28 million gallons. Current conservation activities include low flush toilet giveaways, public education and street sweeping.[7]



Wastewater Collection and Treatment

The City's Municipal Services Department provides sewer services for that portion of the City located north of Nyes Place. The City contracts with the Aliso Water Management Agency for wastewater treatment at a plant located in Aliso Canyon. The plant has a current capacity of 6.7 millions gallons per day with average daily flows from the City at approximately 2 million gallons per day. The City has an aging sewer system so sewer line repair is a top priority. The Sewer Fund recently received $4 million generated from the sale of surplus capacity at the Coastal Treatment Plant, making capital improvements to the existing system possible. Current City efforts also focus on transferring nuisance water from the storm drains to the sewer system during dry months.

Health and Human Services

Laguna Beach has access to high quality health services. The South Coast Medical Center maintains 381 physicians, 212 nurses and 25 medical staff. It offers 14 key services and 18 free or low-cost health classes, programs or support groups. The Laguna Beach Community Clinic provides medical, dental and health education services to the community and as a community-based organization, seeks to serve all individuals in Orange County, regardless of the ability to pay. Laguna Beach is also home to a large number of therapists offering a range of services that include psychotherapy, marriage and family counseling, substance abuse treatment and crisis counseling.

Schools and Education

Laguna Beach offers a range of educational opportunities to its residents. The community supports its own

school district with two elementary schools, one middle school and one high school. Two private elementary schools and the Art Institute of Southern California are also located in Laguna Beach. Adult learners can take classes at the Laguna Beach Adult School at Laguna Beach High School, the La Playa Center and the Art Institute of Southern California. Everyone in the community has access to the 66,500 books located in the County-maintained Laguna Beach Library.

In 1999, the Laguna Beach Unified School District had 2,500 students enrolled in its four schools, all of which rank between 700-850 (out of 1000) according to the Academic Performance Index. With an average SAT score of 1095, 62% of high school seniors scored above the national average on the SAT.[8] Private foundations and the community-at-large offer added support to the District through grants, fundraising activities, the PTA and other activities. Today, the School District's General Fund budget exceeds $17 million. The District plans to invest $15 million in building improvements through facilities modernization funds from the state and other local funding.[9]

Parks and Recreation

Laguna Beach's parks and recreation system offers something for everyone. The City is surrounding by several regional parks and recreation areas, including Aliso and Wood Canyons Regional Parks, South Coast Wilderness Park, and Laguna Niguel Regional Park. Along the coast, the City maintains five ocean front parks and many acres of sandy beach. Seven community parks and numerous playing fields are located throughout the City. Many of these parks provide amenities such as walking trails, picnic tables, barbeques, children's play equipment, bathrooms, volleyball and basketball courts, and championship lawn bowling. Throughout the City, residents can enjoy these same activities at several neighborhood parks while eleven mini-parks offer unique views of the ocean, hillsides or canyons. The estimated 3,500 canine residents of Laguna Beach even get their own Bark Park in Laguna Canyon.

Community facilities include the Veteran's Memorial Community Center, the Lang Park and Community Center, the City Hall Recreation Building and the Laguna Beach High School and Community Pool. The City's Recreation Division offers a variety of special programs at the pool, including beginning to advanced Red Cross swim lessons, lap swimming, aquatic exercise classes, youth swim teams, and water safety certification classes. The City Council recently approved a concept for a new senior community center that focuses on the needs of Laguna Beach elders.

Tens of thousands of people, both residents and visitors, use Laguna Beach parks and recreation facilities. Over 5,000 people participate in the City's fee-based recreation programs. Currently, all soccer and baseball fields are used to their capacity.

Technology

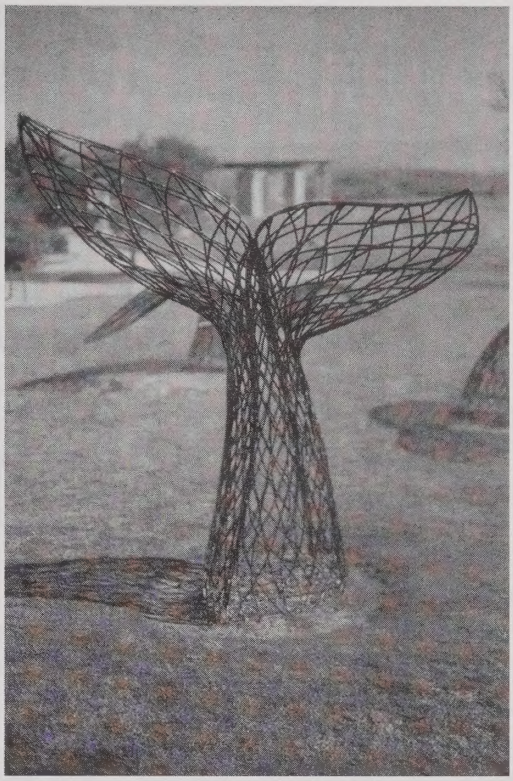
Access to technology and telecommunications is critical for citizens, students, businesses and the City of Laguna Beach. Over 10,000 households have cable TV service while 2,100 residents and businesses receive broad band service via fiberoptic cable.[10] Orange County has the third highest adult internet penetration rate (55%) in the US, trailing only Washington DC (60%) and San Francisco (56%).[11]

Culture and Art

Culture and the arts are the cornerstones of the Laguna Beach community. Over 80 galleries and 400 registered artists populate the City , with an additional 400 artists either living, working, or exhibiting in Laguna Beach. The City hosts three art festivals every year, while the Laguna Beach Art Museum, The Laguna Playhouse, and the First Thursday Art Walk provide regular activities and events for residents and tourists. The Art Institute of Southern California offers classes and gallery space.

Since the 1930s, The Festival of Arts and Pageant of the Masters made Laguna Beach its home, offering visitors original art and a stage production of living art re-creations. Today, it is unclear as to whether the Festival and the Pageant will remain in Laguna Beach as discussions continue between the Festival and the City of San Clemente about the Festival moving to that City.

The City contributes to the arts by administering the Art in Public Places program, which requires all redevelopment projects either contribute 1.25% to the Art-in-lieu Fund or spend 1% of the assessed valuation for the purchase of public art. The City also makes the arts more accessible and less expensive by collaborating with the summer festivals to create the *Passport to Laguna*, which includes a discount pass to the three festival grounds and the Laguna Art Museum, and a trolley pass.



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[1] City of Laguna Beach 1999 Annual Budget.
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[4] *Los Angeles Times.* January 24, 2000.
[5] *Laguna Beach Police Department 1997 Annual Report.* City of Laguna Beach. 2000.
[6] City of Laguna Beach 1999 Annual Report.
[7] Laguna Beach County Water District, 2000.
[8] Orange County Department of Education, 2000.
[9] *Laguna Beach Unified School District Community News.* Fall 1999.
[10] Cox Communications. 2000.
[11] *Orange County Community Indicators Report.* County of Orange. 1999.

Questions to Consider

CULTURE AND THE ARTS

- *What is the role of culture and the arts in the future?*
- *How should the arts be organized and coordinated?*
- *Is there competition between organizations for limited funding? How can collaboration be encouraged?*

GOVERNANCE

- *How can local government be assured that it continues to be responsive to community needs?*
- *What role should the community associations and citizen committees play in the future?*
- *What new revenue sources should the City explore?*
- *What role should Laguna Beach play in regional issues?*

PARKS AND RECREATION

- *What are the highest citywide priorities for recreation?*
- *How can we meet future recreation needs?*

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

- *Are all neighborhoods well served with infrastructure?*

SCHOOLS

- *What are the significant opportunities and challenges for providing lifelong learning (from childhood to adult) to Laguna Beach citizens?*
- *How can we promote more partnerships between the community and the schools?*

TECHNOLOGY

- *What role should the City play to assure that all citizens have sufficient technological access for full participation in the new economy?*
- *How should the City use "smart technology" to manage public infrastructure?*
- *What is the best way to prepare the Community's youth for living and working in the new technological age?*
- *Should the City develop a Technology Element for itsGeneral Plan?*
- *In what ways should the City embrace the Internet and other advanced technology to improve individual customer service and organizational effectiveness?*

Neighboring Communities

Probably the most significant external impact on Laguna Beach over the last 30 years has been the dramatic growth of the surrounding communities in Central and South Orange County. As shown in Figure 21, these cities and the County have been growing and continue to grow dramatically faster than Laguna Beach. Population in Laguna Beach grew only 5.0% between 1990 and 1999 and housing stock grew 2.0%. In comparison, Orange County population grew by 13.5% and housing stock by 9.1% during these years.

This chapter compares demographic information and growth for the following neighboring cities: Newport Beach/Newport Coast, Aliso Viejo, Dana Point, Laguna Woods, Laguna Niguel, Laguna Hills and Irvine. Where possible, each jurisdiction's planning or development approach is described along with planned projects and projects under construction. See Figure 22 for a map of the region surrounding Laguna Beach.

Orange County

Orange County offers a high quality of life to its residents and attracts thousands of visitors each year. In addition to its natural beauty, Orange County has a diverse economic base that features many high technology companies, world-class business services, real estate opportunities and an internationally recognized tourism industry. More than 25% of Orange County's jobs are in the high technology industry. The County's unemployment rate is among the lowest in the nation.[1]

Orange County will experience significant changes due to strong population and employment growth. As illustrated in Figure 23, Orange County's population is expected to grow by 13.2% to over 3.2 million people in 2020. The number of jobs is expected to grow by 70% by 2020—substantially more than the neighboring counties of Los Angeles (39%) and San Diego (41%), but less than Riverside (223%) and San Bernardino (116%) (See Figure 24). As a result of the increase in jobs, more people will travel into the County to work. OCTA predicts that freeway traffic and transit use will increase and cause average times to work and daily hours of delay to increase as well (see Figure 25).

Figure 21
REGIONAL PROFILE

Community	1999 Population	Population Growth 1990–1999	Population Projection 2000–2020	Median Home Value	Median Household Income	% Hispanic Population	% Asian Population	% White Population
Aliso Viejo*	30,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dana Point	37,343	17.0%	N/A	$337,100	$54,516	14%	2%	83%
Laguna Beach	24,325	5.0%	1.7%	$463,000	$65,382	11%	2.4%	85.7%
Laguna Hills	30,757	29.3%	-3.5%	$239,300	$40,489	6%	6%	87%
Laguna Niguel	57,836	32.2%	6.8%	$305,312	$68,738	9%	7%	82%
Laguna Woods	19,496	N/A	N/A	$174,900	$40,612	N/A	6%	90%
Irvine	133,700	23.7%	9.3%	$294,700	$56,307	18%	6%	74%
Newport Beach	72,623	11.0%	1.5%	$500,001	$60,374	4%	3%	92%
Orange Co.	2,775,619	13.5%	13.2%	$275,743	$56,352	29.7%	12.5%	55.9%

* Few statistics exist for Aliso Viejo due to its status as an unincorporated area.

Source: Welcome Home: Southern California Relocation Guide. Center for Demographic Research, CSUF. City of Newport Beach.

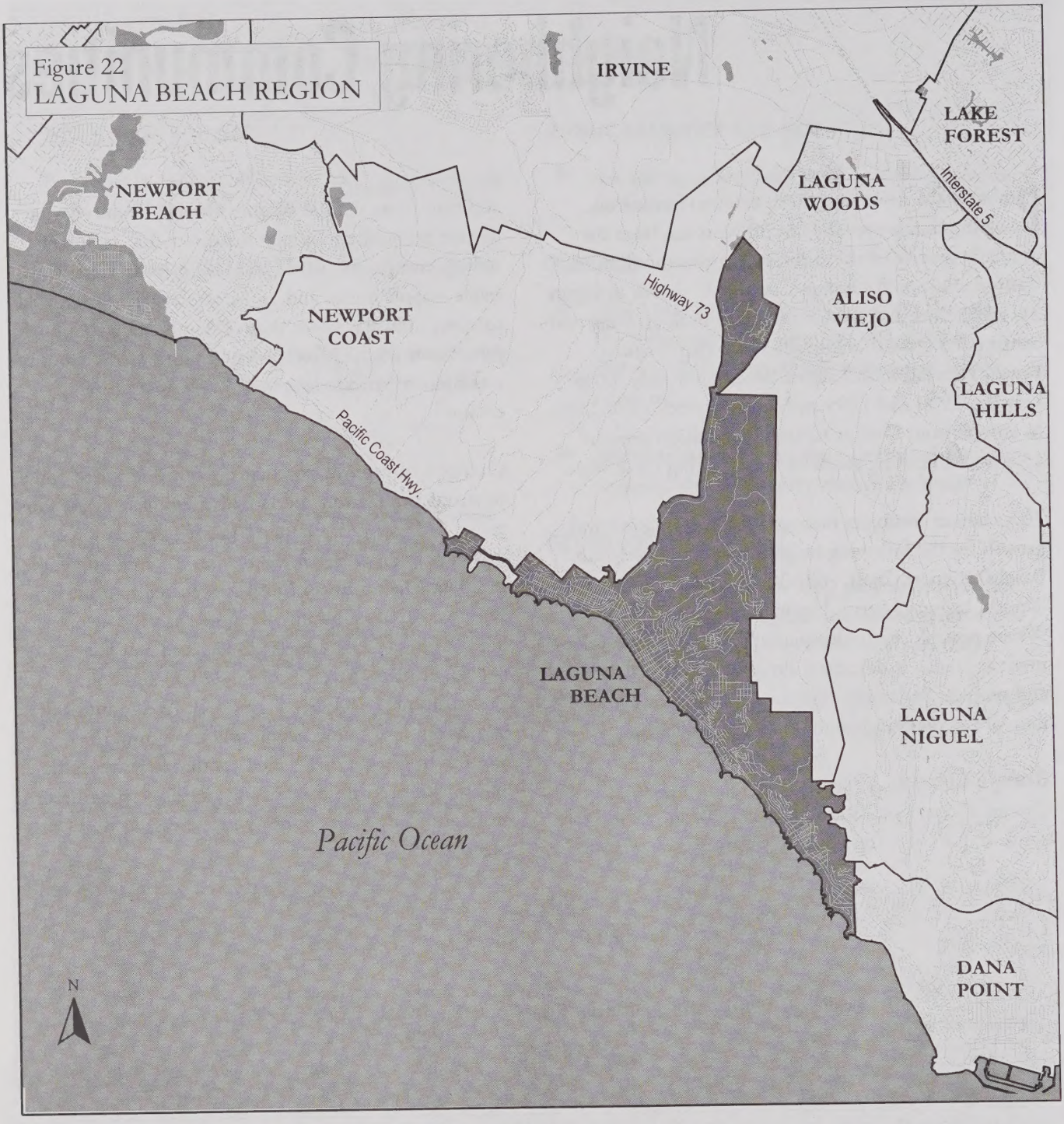
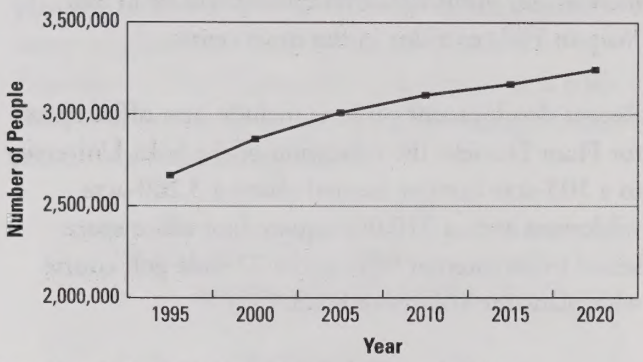


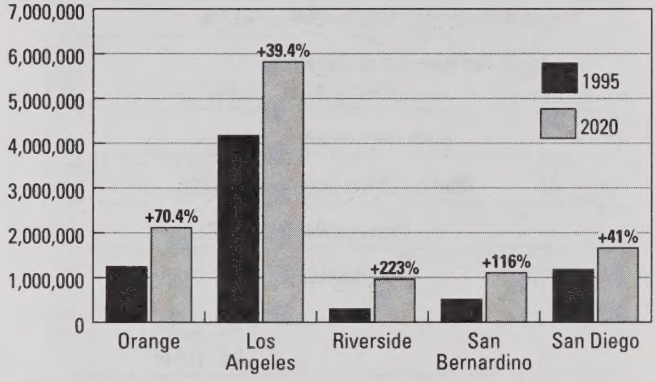
Figure 22
LAGUNA BEACH REGION

Figure 23
ORANGE COUNTY POPULATION GROWTH PROJECTIONS



Source: Center for Demographic Studies, California State University, Fullerton

Figure 24
REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT GROWTH



Source: Center for Demographic Research, California State University, Fullerton

The proposed project to reuse the 4,700-acre El Toro airfield, a decommissioned Marine Corps base located northeast of Laguna Beach, as an international airport will also contribute to projected employment growth.

Most of the airfield's land is unincorporated, but a portion is within the City of Irvine. This airport could potentially replace the John Wayne Airport in Irvine. County planners have proposed numerous plans, but have not finalized them, due to local opposition and the recent passage of Measure F. The City of Laguna Beach publicly opposes the El Toro Airport proposal due to concerns about local safety, noise, pollution, traffic and other environmental impacts. The County suspended the airport planning program, effective April 7, 2000, pending court clarification of the activities allowed under the terms of the Measure F spending limits.

If implemented, the proposed El Toro airport plan could generate 824 arriving and departing flights daily. Flights could carry 28.8 million passengers annually and 2.01 million tons of cargo. Because of El Toro's capacity, John Wayne Airport would carry fewer passengers, 5.4 million passengers a year, although it has a capacity to carry 15 million passengers and has a temporary cap of 8.4 million passengers due to expire in 2005.[2]

According to airport proponents, the El Toro Airport could create more than 16,000 jobs on-site and almost 93,000 jobs countywide. It would have major traffic impacts on the surrounding highway system, as it would generate 283,000 vehicle trips daily. Noise from flights would severely impact more than 9,500 homes and 30,000 residents in the surrounding communities.[3]

Newport Beach

Newport Beach has grown rapidly during the last decade, but according to city planners has placed strict

Figure 25
2020 OUTLOOK ON TRAVEL WITHIN ORANGE COUNTY

Mobility Characteristics	1995	2020	Change
Daily Vehicle Miles	60.0 million miles	86.4 million miles	Up
Daily Hours Delay	531,800 hours	1.1 million hours	Up
Peak Travel Speeds	25 mph	20 mph	Down
Average Daily Speeds	31 mph	28 mph	Down
Average Work Travel Time	26 minutes	39 minutes	Up

Source: Orange County Transportation Authority (1999)

restrictions on quality and density of both residential and commercial development. As of 1999, numerous mid-range projects are under construction, including the renovation of the old Balboa Theater. Other planned projects include the 750-room Newport Dunes Hotel and the Conexant project, a 566,000 sq.ft. industrial/office development.

Figure 26
NEWPORT BEACH PROFILE

1999 Population:	72,623
Population growth 1990 to 1999:	11%
Projected Population Growth 2000 to 2020:	1.5%
Median Income:	$60,374
Median home Value:	$500,001
Average rent:	$1,006
Demographics:	92% White 4% Hispanic 3% Asian 1% Other
Percentage of land built out:	98%

Source: Welcome Home: Southern California Relocation Guide. Center for Demographic Research, CSUF. City of Newport Beach.

The City of Newport Beach will annex Newport Coast effective January 1, 2001. Today there are 3,500 dwelling units and 7,500 people living in the area. By 2007, the City estimates the number of homes will increase to 4,640 units and 9,700 people. Five major resort sites with a total of 2,150 resort units are planned for Newport Coast. The area will also include a 1,000 sq. ft. commercial site located on the North Coast Highway.

Aliso Viejo

Twenty years ago Aliso Viejo started as a master-planned community and it now hopes to incorporate as a city by the end of year 2000. It is considered one of the fastest growing areas in Orange County, with population expected to increase from 30,000 in 1999 to 48,000 in 2005.[4] Due to Aliso Viejo's status as an unincorporated area more demographic data is not readily available.

According to the County, most land available for residential development has been built out. Future commercial and industrial development will be in San Joaquin Hills corridor in the town center.

Recent development projects include new office space for Fluor Daniels, the relocation of the Soka University to a 103-acre campus located above a 3,200-acre wilderness area, a 310,000 square foot office space leased to an internet firm, and a 27-hole golf course with plans for 406-room hotel.

Figure 27
CITY OF IRVINE PROFILE

1999 Population:	133,700
Population growth 1990 to 1999:	23.7%
Projected Population Growth 2000 to 2020:	9.3%
Median Income:	$56,307
Median Home Value:	$294,700
Average Rent:	$1,122
Demographics:	74% White 18% Hispanic 6% Asian 2% Other
Percentage of land built out:	95% residential 92% commercial/ industrial

Source: Welcome Home: Southern California Relocation Guide. Center for Demographic Research, CSUF. City of Irvine.

Irvine

Irvine is currently the largest planned city in North America. Incorporated in 1971, it has grown rapidly and is now experiencing its largest building boom ever. Irvine's most attractive features are its location in the center of Orange County with access to several major freeways and the Metro-link rail system, its schools and its residential neighborhoods. The City has two large business centers, several shopping centers and universities, including the University of California, Irvine.

Although Irvine has grown rapidly, city planners feel the growth has been very carefully planned and controlled. Currently, numerous large-scale residential

projects and a few industrial developments for high-tech and for research and development companies are planned and under review. The City is also building many neighborhood level commercial areas. Expansion of the Marketplace commercial area positions it to overtake Fashion Island as Orange County's second highest grossing venue.[5]

Figure 28
LAGUNA NIGUEL PROFILE

1999 Population:	57,836
Population growth 1990 to 1999:	32.2%
Projected Population Growth 2000 to 2020:	6.8%
Median Income:	$68,738
Median Home Value:	$305,312
Demographics:	82% White 9% Hispanic 7% Asian 2% Other
Percentage of land built out:	96% residential 100% commercial

Source: Welcome Home: Southern California Relocation Guide. Center for Demographic Research, CSUF. City of Laguna Niguel.

Laguna Niguel

Laguna Niguel incorporated in 1989 and has followed Laguna Beach's lead by designating over one-third of the City's land as open space. Very little future development can occur due to the high percentage of land already built out. Recent development proposals include a 150,000 sq. ft. commercial development and some small residential developments. The City recently completed the Gateway Specific Plan to convert the area around Route 5, an older industrial area, to automotive retail and office buildings. Residential development has been proposed for the Monarch area overlooking South Laguna, but not approved, due to strong local opposition.

Laguna Hills

Laguna Hills is home to some of Orange County's best medical facilities, a large mall and many fine restaurants. The City was once centered around the Leisure World Retirement Community, but now offers diverse residential developments. The City characterizes itself as pro-development, but approving only the highest quality projects. While some land remains for residential development, the City is built out for commercial developments. The largest planned project is the expansion of the Saddleback Memorial Hospital's Critical Care Pavilion. In the near future, the City plans to build residential in-fill projects and shopping center renovations.

Figure 29
LAGUNA HILLS PROFILE

1999 Population:	30,757
Population Growth 1991 to 1998:	29.3%
Projected Population Growth 2000 to 2020:	-3.5%
Median Income:	$40,489
Median Home Value:	$239,300
Average Rent:	$809
Demographics:	87% White 6% Hispanic 6% Asian 1% Other
Percentage of land built out:	92% residential 100% commercial

Source: Welcome Home: Southern California Relocation Guide. Center for Demographic Research, CSUF. City of Laguna Hills.

Dana Point

This area first became known when the 19th Century author, Richard Henry Dana, wrote about the Headlands and the powerful ocean waves of the beach to the south. The Los Angeles developer of Hollywood, Sydney Woodruff, later capitalized on the area's beauty by purchasing 1,400 acres and selling them to private homebuilders. Showcase homes and outstanding schools are now some of the town's most prominent features. The Dana Point Harbor is home to the Orange County Marine Institute and docks nearly 2,500 boats.

According to the City, Dana Point controls growth to ensure that it fits in with the city's character. One 200-unit and one 45-unit residential project are planned for the near future. A developer has proposed a 125-acre,

Figure 30
DANA POINT PROFILE

1999 Population:	37,343
Population growth 1990 to 1999:	17%
Median Income:	$54,516
Median Home Value:	$337,100
Average Rent:	$994
Demographics:	83% White 14% Hispanic 2% Asian 1% Other
Percentage of land built out:	91-92% for both residential and commercial

Source: Welcome Home: Southern California Relocation Guide. Center for Demographic Research, CSUF. City of Dana Point.

low-density residential project for the Headlands, directly on the ocean, but the project is highly controversial and the City has not approved it.

Laguna Woods

Laguna Woods was incorporated in 1999 and is now developing a General Plan. The City is mostly within the gated community of Leisure World, an owner occupied retirement community, and is fully built out.

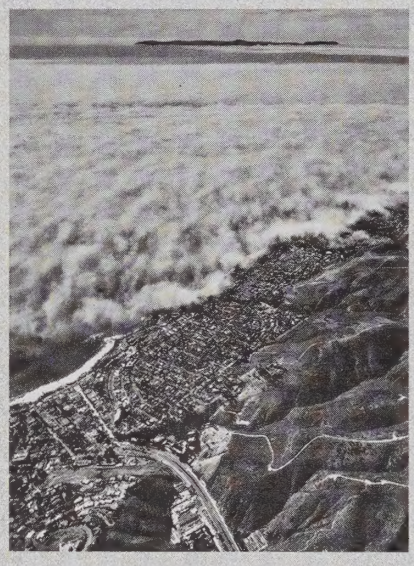
Figure 31
LAGUNA WOODS PROFILE

1999 Population:	19,496
Median Income:	$40,612
Median Home Value:	$174,900
Demographics:	90% White 6% Asian 4% Other
Percentage of land built out:	100%

Source: Welcome Home: Southern California Relocation Guide. Center for Demographic Research, CSUF. City of Laguna Woods.

Questions to Consider

- ***How will growth pressures from surrounding communities affect Laguna Beach?***
- ***What impact will existing and future airport proposals have on Laguna Beach?***
- ***What type of relationship do we want with the adjoining communities?***
- ***What impact will new development in adjoining communities have on Laguna Beach?***



[1] *Welcome Home: Southern California Relocation Guide.* Benchmark Publishing Company. 1999 (www.welcomehome.to)
[2] *MCAS El Toro Reuse Plan: Executive Summary.* March, 1998.
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[5] Center for Demographic Research, California State Fullerton. July 1, 1996 City Boundary.

Community Organizations and Neighborhood Associations in Laguna Beach

Community Organizations

(Source: Laguna Beach Chamber of Commerce Community Directory 2000)

Aids Services Foundation
Alliance Franchise
American Association of University Women (A.A.U.W.)
American Legion Post #222
American Paralysis Association (A.P.A)
Art Institute of Southern California
Art-A-Fair
Assistance League of Laguna Beach
Ballet Pacifica
Boy Scouts of Laguna Beach
Boys & Girls Club of Laguna Beach
Brandy's Friends
Bridge Learning Center for Homeless Children
Nicole Brown Charitable Foundation
Canyon Club, The
Century Exchange Club
Chabad of Laguna
Chabad of Laguna Beach Jewish Community Center
Children's Hospital of Orange County
Chocolate Lovers of America
Coalition of Neighborhood Associations (C.O.N.A.)
Community Art Project
Cross Cultural Task Force
Crystal Cove State Park
C.S.P. Youth Shelter
D.A.R. Patience Wright Chapter
Ebell Club
Episcopal Services Alliance
Exchange Club of Laguna Beach
Farmer's Market
Festival of Arts
Friends of Laguna Beach Library
Friends of the Library Foundation
Friends of the Sea Lion
Friendship Shelter
Garden Club of Laguna Beach
Gift of Legacy
Health Care Agency
Hortense Miller Garden
Housing & Human Affairs Council
Human Options
Imagination Celebration of Orange County
Laguna Beach Architectural Guild
Laguna Beach AYSO
Laguna Beach Ballet Studio
Laguna Beach Board of Realtors
Laguna Beach Chamber of Commerce
Laguna Beach Community Clinic
Laguna Beach Democratic Club
Laguna Beach Girl Scouts
Laguna Beach Historical Society
Laguna Beach Lawn Bowling
Laguna Beach Library
Laguna Beach Little League
Laguna Beach Panhellenic Association
Laguna Beach Poets
Laguna Beach Pop Warner Football
Laguna Beach Republicans
Laguna Beach Seniors
Laguna Beach Taxpayers Association
Laguna Beach Tennis Association
Laguna Beach Visitor's Bureau
Laguna Art Museum
Laguna Canyon Conservancy
Laguna Chamber Music Society
Laguna Club for Kids
Laguna Craft Guild
Laguna Enrichment & Resources Network (L.E.A.R.N.)
Laguna Folk Dancers
Laguna GreenBelt, Inc.
Laguna Outreach Community Arts (LOCA)
Laguna Outreach, Inc.
Laguna Playhouse
Laguna Shanti
La Playa Center
League of Women Voters
Log Cabin Republicans
Music in the Park
National Charity League
One Stop Immigration & Education Center
Opera League of Laguna Beach
Patriots Day Parade
Performing Arts Center, L.B. Guilds
Rescuing Unwanted Furry Friends (R.U.F.F.)
Rotary Club of Laguna Beach
Sally's Fund
Sawdust Festival
SchoolPower
Sierra SAGE Club
Soroptimist Club
Storyteller's Guild of Orange County
St. Catherine's Catholic School
STOP-GAP
SurfRider Foundation
TIMOTCA Pye Panda
UNICEF
Very Special Arts Orange County
Veterans of Foreign Wars (V.F.W.)
Village Laguna
Volunteer Center of Greater Orange County
Women's Club of Laguna Beach
Women of Vision
Y.M.C.A., South Orange County

Neighborhood Associations

(Source: City of Laguna Beach)

Alta Vista Association
Allview Terrace Association
Arch Beach Heights Association
Bluebird Canyon Association
Bluebird Knolls Association
Blue Lagoon

00 00966

Canyon Acres Neighborhood Association
Castlerock Association
Coalition of Neighborhood Associations
Crescent Bay Association
El Mirador Association
Emerald Bay Association
Irvine Cove Community Association
Lagunita
Laguna Beach South Entrance Association
Laguna Canyon Property Owners
Lower Diamond Association
Laguna North
Lower Skyline Association
North Laguna Community Association
Milligan Drive Association
Mystic Hills
Mystic Park Association
Old Top of the World Association
Portafina Association
Seacliff Drive Association
South Laguna Civic Association
Summit ridge
Temple Hills Community Association
Three Arch Bay Association
Towna
Treasure Island
Victoria Association
Woods Cove Association
Upper Diamond/Crestview Association
Upper Bluebird Canyon Association
Upper Victoria Beach

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Laguna Beach Webguides: www.laguna-beach.ca.us, www.lagunabeach.net

Center for Demographic Research, Cal State University, Fullerton: www.cdr1.fullerton.edu

California Department of Finance: http://www.dof.ca.gov/

Orange County Register: www.discoverOC2000.com

Orange County Now: www.ocnow.com

Welcome Home: Southern California Relocation Guide.www.welcomehome.to

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